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Get in the car and drive

People who seek peace in things, places, people and activities—or in world-flight, poverty and humiliation, whatever the avenue or degree—look in vain, for there is no peace this way.—Meister Eckhart

Anne Stuckey **is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.**

I crested a hill on Highway 401 in the dark and was presented with a view of three lanes of traffic stretching as far as I could see. The night seemed to emphasize the endless string of red taillights, and the cars ahead were indistinguishable from each other at this distance. In the dark I could not differentiate models or brands of vehicles. The usual rust or riches evident in our choice of transportation was nullified in the dark. License plates to indicate identity or home base were difficult to read.

It wasn't that all these cars were stopped. No one was stuck because of an accident or construction. Each lane was speeding forward 80 mph. This was not a leisurely Sunday afternoon drive for these people. This was intense energy going in a specific direction. All were heading east with purpose. I sensed these people must be running. At 80 mph, running is the appropriate verb to use. We all looked the same, moved the same and went in the same direction.

But what were these people running toward or away from? And why was there a need for such speed? Was what we were running toward more or less important than what we were running from?

I thought of Elijah's run, escaping the danger of his queen, Jezebel. It didn't matter to him what he was running toward. He just wanted to run away. Many people say there are days when they just want to get in the car and drive. We want to get out on the open road and forget about what we are leaving behind. We want to run away from difficult marriages and children out of our control. We tend to run away from conflict, both realized and potential. We run from knowing the state of our body's health by not going to the doctor. And we run away from taking responsibility for our health by listening only to what we want to hear. We run to avoid confronting our government when it takes an action we know is not what Jesus would do. And we run from the poor in our own communities by not even admitting they exist. We are intense runners.

And God asks us the same question he asked Elijah, "What are you doing here?" (1 Kings 19:9). After running for 40 days and 40 nights, Elijah had to be exhausted. He likely didn't want to do anything at that point. But God begins his conversation with Elijah by quizzing him about his activity. "What are you doing?" God had caught Elijah in the act of running away from what God had called him to do. The prophet had hoped to end his difficult service and just rest in God's backyard. Elijah needed to admit that he was indeed running away and couldn't run fast enough to escape God.

God's question also adds a dimension of place to Elijah's action of running. Elijah had stopped at a cave on Mount Horeb a full 250 miles from where he was supposed to be. In asking Elijah, "What are you doing here?" God was inquiring why Elijah was there at all. When we run, we move away from the place we are supposed to be in life. Therefore it is no wonder that running is such exhausting work. We tend to run to anyplace we can hide from our troubles. We pray that the thorny issues of our life won't follow us there. Elijah ran through the wilderness to a mountain to hide. But was that where God wanted him to be?

Where do you find yourself now? What are you running from? I was on Highway 401 returning to my extended family home. I knew I was running toward something and running away from something as well. And I, like everyone else on this highway of life, was going 80 mph. TM

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 1, January 10, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Cover and page 8 photo illustrations by Dee Birkey

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 40033185, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526

Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Then and now

The news, especially from our church, has been concerned with the four Christian Peacemaker Teams activists in Iraq who are facing execution this day, Dec. 10, 2005. My thoughts go back hundreds of years to the period when our forebears lost their lives for what they believed. It was certainly a time of unrest and injustice brought on at least in part by politics and the national leaders of that day. Those martyrs were on the cutting edge of their faith and ours. What is taking place in Iraq—which has prompted our brave comrades in faith to do what they believe needs to be done to bring violence and injustice to the attention of the world—requires our highest thoughts. Again, it is politics and policies that foster situations that bring out the voices of people crying in the wilderness for a different approach to solving bad situations in our world. Our country and the policies in place are a part of this deplorable situation. Our country is at least partly to blame for the situation in Iraq. This situation that calls for brave, peace-loving Christians to be willing to be martyrs for their and our faith. It is our responsibility to think about the results of what has been done and what is happening. Our faith, then and now.—*Caleb Gerber, Dalton, Ohio*

Missional meals

When the Missional Church Team meets again ("Leadership," Nov. 15, 2005), I hope that it will take time to reflect on Luke 10:7. It happens that this was perhaps the most mind-bending direction Jesus would give the Seventy. When Jesus began his ministry, he confronted a religious culture that was ingrown because of rules of kosher purity. One ate only with those who shared the same understanding of what was pure in food, but also in keeping of all the law. Jesus says, in effect, pay no attention to these kosher rules: "Eat and drink whatever is set before you."

By a single stroke, Jesus freed his followers to be open to so-called sinners, just as he was welcoming in his own eating and drinking. So mind-blowing was this that the disciples could only report back to him that even the demons submitted to them, and Jesus says he saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.

It is a word our church needs to heed again today, fellowshipping with those who do not keep all the law as we may understand it, like the Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church ("Hyattsville Church a 'Nonvoting Participant,'" Nov. 15, 2005). —*Donald R. Steelberg, Wichita, Kan.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Stewardship Sunday for Mennonite Church USA will be observed in January instead of May beginning this year. So we focus this issue on stewardship and launch a new series entitled "Holistic Stewardship." Roy E. Bronkema kicks off the series (page 8) and says, "The concept that God is hard up for our cash has captured our society's imagination. … But Jesus' concept of stewardship was much greater in scope." Our denomination's stewardship agency responds to a question it often receives: Is MMA moving toward becoming more of a business and away from its church roots? (page 13). "I see MMA as a church organization that uses business tools to reach our ultimate goal of helping the church, its members and institutions apply faith values when making resource decisions," says interim president Steve L. Garboden. This issue also includes a compelling story about "seagoing cowboys"—1,000 Mennonite men who transported cattle to impoverished countries after World War II (page 14).—*Editor*

Correcting the record

One of the exciting things about mission in today's world is the interconnectedness among congregations, conferences, agencies and even denominations—all joining together to do God's work. Unfortunately, due to an oversight, we omitted one of those connections from the Nov. 15, 2005, story, "Known Through God." Mark and Mary Hurst serve as resource people and pastors in Australia and with the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand through Mennonite Mission Network and Eastern Mennonite Missions.—*Ryan Miller, news director, Mennonite Mission Network*

Why is fundamentalism negative?

I heard an individual make the comment—while trying to decide which church to visit—in the process of finding a church home, "I don't want to go to that church because they are fundamental."

I knew that denomination was solid in its adherence to the teachings of Christ. As true followers of Christ, they accept the Scriptures as being written by inspiration from God. They believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God and are therefore not considered some false religion or cult practicing heresy but rather a body of Christ trying to obey his Word as closely as they possibly can.

Why has the Christian faith allowed the term "fundamentalism" to be hijacked by non-Christians who portray it to be a negative term? Why have we not made it clear to the secular world that we do not identify with ungodly extremism just because we are fundamental in our view of the Scriptures? Why have we allowed the words "evangelism" and "born again" to become so misunderstood and used in such a derogatory way?

It is time to reclaim these godly terms for their original intent and use them, as did the early church of the New Testament, to help build God's Kingdom in this age.—*Carol Laser, Winchester, Va.*

Poem anti-Semitic

After reading the letter from Bryan Barry (Readers Say, Nov. 1, 2005), I went back to the Sept. 20 issue to look at the poem "Bar Mitzvah," and I agree with Mr. Barry entirely.

As a lifelong Mennonite who has been blessed to learn about Jewish religion and history from Jewish teachers, I find the ignorance and prejudice expressed in this poem appalling. Aside from being awful poetry, Jerome L. McElroy's work makes the terribly false assumption that Jesus' answers to the teachers in the temple (Luke 2:41-50) "shred[ded] their theologic shibboleths."

The gospel says no such thing, much less that "the unintended consequence" (unintended by whom?) of his visit was "their ultimate undoing. To accompany this bigotry with a picture of a real Jewish boy at his bar mitzvah simply adds insult to the injury.—*David Rensberger, Decatur, Ga.*

Two swords

While I do not doubt that Jesus was tempted to use violence to bring in the kingdom, I do not believe that in the "two swords" incident in Luke 22 Jesus was seriously advocating armed self-protection or insurrection. ("Swords of the Disciples," Oct. 4, 2005).

Is it not possible that Jesus was laying out some of the temptations he was enduring and—speaking as devil's advocate—testing his disciples and their reaction? He sets up a sharp contrast by reminding them of the time he had sent them out without sandals, money or duffel bags.

The Gospels need to be read as a whole, and one shouldn't fall prey to proof-texting a particular passage to justify the arms race or even to condemn it. One must use all four of the evangelists' record of Jesus' words and behavior to do that. —*John A. Hertzler, Mathews, Va.*

Teaching pacifism

I agree with Katie Immel ("Passing on the Pacifism," Dec. 6, 2005) that it is sad to have grown up in a Mennonite church, attended Mennonite middle and high schools and gone to Mennonite church camp without learning the basis of pacifism and what it means for her life and walk with Jesus. But she does not mention attending a Mennonite college or university.

A student who attends Bluffton University, where I teach, would certainly learn the biblical and theological basis of nonviolence and its relevance to all aspects of life in courses taught by the religion department as well as in our general education offerings. Since I know the faculty at our other Mennonite schools, I know that the same is true there as well. Young people who want to develop a solid understanding of the Mennonite church's peace stance should attend a Mennonite university or college, then should make their learning visible wherever they attend church. That would go far toward solving Katie Immel's concern.—*J. Denny Weaver, Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio*

The elusive monster

Re "The Elusive Monster," Mediaculture, Dec. 20, 2005: The subtle influence of the consumer culture is felt not only in material issues but in our faith discourse and vocabulary and perhaps even our discernment and spiritual development, not to mention our mission.

An example is the popular claim of Jesus as "my personal Savior." Do these words not reflect consumer advertising? Do they reduce our Lord to a personal commodity, a possession? Can such expressions create a wall between the haves and the have-nots in the fashion of material commodities?—*Ruth Eitzen, Barto, Pa.*

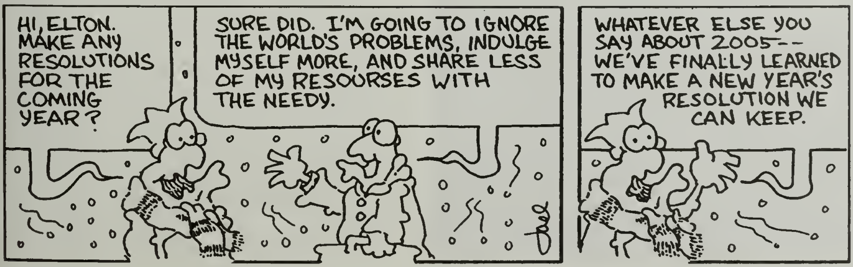
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

In terms of stewardship, the most important element to focus on is (34 votes):

○ health (14%)
○ money (16%)
○ relationships (38%)
○ talent (11%)
○ time (22%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


HI, ELTON. MAKE ANY RESOLUTIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR?
SURE DID. I'M GOING TO IGNORE THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS, INDULGE MYSELF MORE, AND SHARE LESS OF MY RESOURSES WITH THE NEEDY.
WHATEVER ELSE YOU SAY ABOUT 2005-- WE'VE FINALLY LEARNED TO MAKE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION WE CAN KEEP.

IN BRIEF

Dick Davis named new minister of urban ministry

Dick Davis, pastor of Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas, Texas, has been named Mennonite Mission Network's new minister of urban ministry. He said the diversity of urban areas can be mixed in a tureen, stirred well and served to feed the wider church. A high-school dropout, Davis earned undergraduate and seminary degrees and held several Baptist pastorates before joining the U.S. Army as a chaplain. While in the army, he studied "The Politics of Jesus" by John Howard Yoder and an introduction to Mennonite history and ideology at Duke University. He returned to the army and applied for conscientious objector status. Eventually he resigned his commission and the army released him. He made contact with Mennonites in eastern Pennsylvania and later became pastor in Dallas. ***—Mennonite Mission Network***

Families of CPTers appeal for their release

BAGHDAD, Iraq—The families of four Christian Peacemaker Teams activists held in Iraq placed newspaper ads in Baghdad newspapers on Christmas Eve appealing for their release. Christmas passed without any word on the four hostages.

The four CPT members—Briton Norman Kember, 74, American Tom Fox, 54, and Canadians James Loney, 41, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32—were kidnapped Nov. 26, 2005, in Baghdad by the Swords of Righteousness Brigade, an Iraqi insurgent group.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Free sample sessions of Gather 'Round online

NEWTON, Kan.—Preparations for a new denominational Sunday school curriculum are bearing fruit as trainers are being selected and sample sessions are added to the Web site. Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News is a curriculum for children, youth and parents in the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

Free sample sessions of teacher and student materials are now posted online at www.gather-round.org. The Web site also includes a price list, Bible outlines and other basic information. Customers without Internet access may call 800-245-7894 for assistance. Sample kits will be available for purchase in February, and congregational use will begin next fall.

In addition to quarterly teacher and student books, Gather 'Round will offer quarterly classroom packs that include such items as teaching pictures and posters. One resource, for example, is a memory verse poster with photographs of children depicting American Sign Language words to represent the memory text, Deuteronomy 6:4-9. —*Mennonite Church USA*

from Destination America

Foresingers appear on PBS documentary

Glenn Lehman s 12-voice ensemble Foresingers was juried and chosen to appear nationwide on "Destination America, airing first last October on PBS. The four-part documentary explores the economic, political, social and religious stories of immigration. The Foresingers, which specializes in early American hymns, is featured in the section The Earth Is the Lord s. It shares the hour with 20th-century stories of Hasidic Jew immigration and Tibetan persecution. From left in the photo above are Sandi Harnish, Nancy Hess, Joel Alderfer, Dennis Kauffman, David Smucker, Gretchen Thomas, Glenn Lehman, Jessica Landes, Varden Leasa, David Sauder and filmmaker David Grubin.—*Glenn Lehman*

Paoli Mennonite helps form urban corps

PAOLI, Ind.—In 2003, people from Paoli Mennonite and Louisville, Ky., formed Louisville Urban Corps (LUC), then placed the first group of participants in September 2004. People from Mennonite Fellowship of Bloomington (Ind.); First Mennonite and Shalom Mennonite of Indianapolis; Lockport Mennonite, Stryker, Ohio, and Carpenter Park Mennonite, Davidsville, Pa., helped remodel a former convent into a home for volunteers.

In August 2005, four young adults finished their year of service, and two of them stayed on in the city. A month later, six new young adults came for the program's second year. The LUC board includes people from Baptist, Catholic and Presbyterian congregations.—*Phil Mininger*

GAMEO holds first editorial meetings

WINNIPEG—The editorial committees of GAMEO, a new Internet international Anabaptist history initiative, held their first meeting Dec. 1-2, 2005, to start expanding a current online resource.

GAMEO, or the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, originated with the Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, begun by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada in 1996. But that project has been broadened with the addition of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and the binational Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission as partners. A U.S. editorial committee has been formed to work with a Canadian committee under the oversight of a management board.—*Mennonite Church USA*

MMA board names new officers

GOSHEN, Ind.—At an MMA Board of Directors meeting Dec. 21, 2005, the board chose its officers for 2006. Arlan Yoder, Hesston, Kan., was named chair, replacing Carol Suter; LaVern Yutzy, Lititz, Pa., was named vice chair, and Richard Friesen, Newton, Kan., was named secretary. All are members of Mennonite Church USA. Yoder is senior vice president and CFO at Via Christi Health System.

In other board changes, Ken Enns, Dinuba,

Kay Youngblood

wish choir performs Handel's "Messiah" in Galilee

e HaKibbutzit HaKamerit and the 45-voice Galil Elyon Choir Northern Galilee comprised of Israeli Jews—perform andel's "Messiah" at the Rev. Elias Chacour's new Church of e Sermon on the Mount in Ibillin, Galilee, Israel. The Jewish ices performed the story of the promised Messiah for an dience of 750 people comprised of local Palestinian Arabs ostly Muslim), other Israeli Jews from the region and a ndful of Christians, all sitting together.—*Mennonite Mission twork*

Calif., and John Burkey, Milford, Neb., left the MMA board at the end of 2005 after serving 12 years, the maximum allowed. Enns is a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church and Burkey of Mennonite Church USA.—*MMA*

Brenneman confirmed as Goshen president

GOSHEN, Ind.—The Goshen College Board of Directors has announced finalization of its appointment of educator, biblical theologian and church leader James E. Brenneman to serve as the college's 16th president, beginning July 1, for a four-year term of leadership of the 111-year-old institution. With Goshen's relationship to Mennonite Church USA through Mennonite Education Agency, the MEA Board of Directors affirmed the appointment on Nov. 28, 2005.

Brenneman, a 1977 Goshen graduate who lives with his family in South Pasadena, Calif., was introduced to the campus and community in a chapel service Nov. 18, 2005, as a final step in a leadership discernment process (see Dec. 6, 2005, issue). He fills the position vacated in September 2004 by Shirley H. Showalter.—*Goshen College*

CMU reappoints Gerbrandt president

WINNIPEG—Gerald Gerbrandt has been reappointed president of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) for another five years. The new contract takes effect June 15.

CMU board chair Abe Konrad, says: "Dr. Gerbrandt's reappointment provides excellent continuity in the passionate, visionary pursuit of CMU as a Christian university of the church for the world. We are delighted with his acceptance, and we invite the prayerful support of the CMU constituency during the ongoing development of CMU."

Gerbrandt is a member of Winnipeg's Bethel Mennonite Church.—*Canadian Mennonite University*

Roy D. Roth, third president of Hesston, dies

HESSTON, Kan.—The third president of Hesston College, Roy D. Roth, died Dec. 15, 2005, in Eugene, Ore., following a long illness. Roth, president from 1951-59, died at the age of 84.

"President Roy Roth served with a lot of dignity," says current president Howard Keim. "He did much to strengthen the academic programs of the college. And he shepherded the discussions of whether Hesston should become a four-year college and the decision to remain a two-year college. That has been a very important decision in the life and history of the college."

Other accomplishments included strengthening transfer agreements with Goshen (Ind.) College, completion of Charles Hall, the start of construction of a men's dormitory and sharing in the cost of building Hesston Mennonite Church, which was dedicated May 27, 1956.—*Hesston College*

Zehr receives restorative justice award

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Howard Zehr, professor of restorative justice and co-director of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, received the first annual award, which is named in his honor, from the Restorative Justice Association of Virginia.

Howard Zehr

The organization gave Zehr the award following his plenary address at a conference the group held last fall in Charlottesville.

Zehr is considered one of the founders of the restorative justice field. While restorative justice concepts extend to addressing issues ranging from wrongdoing in church and mediating conflict in schools, Zehr has worked especially with criminal justice issues.—*Eastern Mennonite University*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

R-rated smoking

A recent study shows that a primary reason children ages 10 to 14 try cigarettes is that they've seen people smoking in movies. The study, which found smoking in 74 percent of 532 movies surveyed, concluded that 38 percent of young smokers took up the practice because of the influence of movies.—*USA Today (Nov. 7, 2005), quoted in Christian Century*

Global violence actually decreasing

According to Andrew Mack, director of the Human Security Center at the University of British Columbia and former United Nations official: "It is not surprising that most people believe global violence is increasing. However, most people, including many leading policymakers and scholars, are wrong. The reality is that, since the end of the Cold War, armed conflict and nearly all other forms of political violence have decreased. The world is far more peaceful than it was."—*Sojo Mail*

Seminary debt

The number of Master of Divinity graduates borrowing $20,000 or more to pay for their education increased 26 percent between 1991 and 2001, according to a report from Auburn Theological Seminary. Twenty-one percent postponed health care to pay school loans.—*Sojourners*

1 in a series of six.

Holistic Stewardship

The delicate dance of stewar

Reflecting the Father's giving heart

On the drive home from church one Sunday, a family was not too happy. Dad complained that the sermon was long and boring; Mom said the organist played too loudly during the second hymn; Sis critiqued the intonation of the soloist, and Grandma said she wanted to sit closer to the front because "no one talks loud enough." And little Todd joined in to fuss about the woman in front of them with the big hat. Then he paused, nudged his dad and added, "But Dad, you gotta admit, it was a pretty good show for a nickel."

Ouch. Todd had it right. For many, a nickel is all they are willing to contribute to the kingdom of Christ. Many people go to church, drop their token in the heavenly toll booth and go their way—not realizing that God is after far more than just their "nickel." But the Bible is clear that when it comes to stewardship, God's purposes are far more encompassing than just forking over the change in our pocket on any given weekend. To coin a phrase, God has "far bigger fish to catch."

Unfortunately, when most people think of stewardship, their minds go to just one thing: money. They picture the church collection plate or the United Way—a preacher to please or a pledge to make. The concept that God is hard up for our cash has captured our society's imagination with a vengeance, thanks to many TV evangelists.

The concept that God is hard up for our cash has captured our society's imagination with a vengeance, thanks to many TV evangelists.

But Jesus' concept of stewardship was much greater in scope than our society's limited perception. The value of stewardship has stronger implications for our daily lives than most of us have ever realized.

Continued on page 10

dship

by Roy E. Bronkema

God asks for a return on his investment in us and to us.

Continued from page 9

Here are some bottom-line principles I have learned that serve as the touchstones for this all-important topic.

1. We have each been given gifts by God. Jesus told an intriguing parable about stewardship in Matthew 25. He describes a master who was embarking on a long trip. Before he departed, the owner granted to trusted servants his assets to manage. To each servant he gave varied "talents," some five, some two, some just one. But the point was clear: everyone got something.

Likewise, each of us has been been granted gifts from our Creator. They reach far beyond finances to the whole of our lives: our families, children, time, health and talents, virtually every spiritual and physical blessing. The New Testament underscores this idea: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17 NIV). God is forever giving. This giving does not change but is as sure as the sun and the moon making an appearance ("the Father of lights"). God is the ultimate source of everything good in our lives.

2. God asks for a return on his gifts. He wants us to willingly and completely yield our bodies, souls and minds. He wants our gifts lavished back on himself. He is the only one in the universe truly worthy of this kind of devotion. After all, the composer has the right to listen to his own song. In seeking our hearts, God receives the truest return on investment possible—because with our hearts comes our allegiance, our time and our possessions. Our truest treasure is within us.

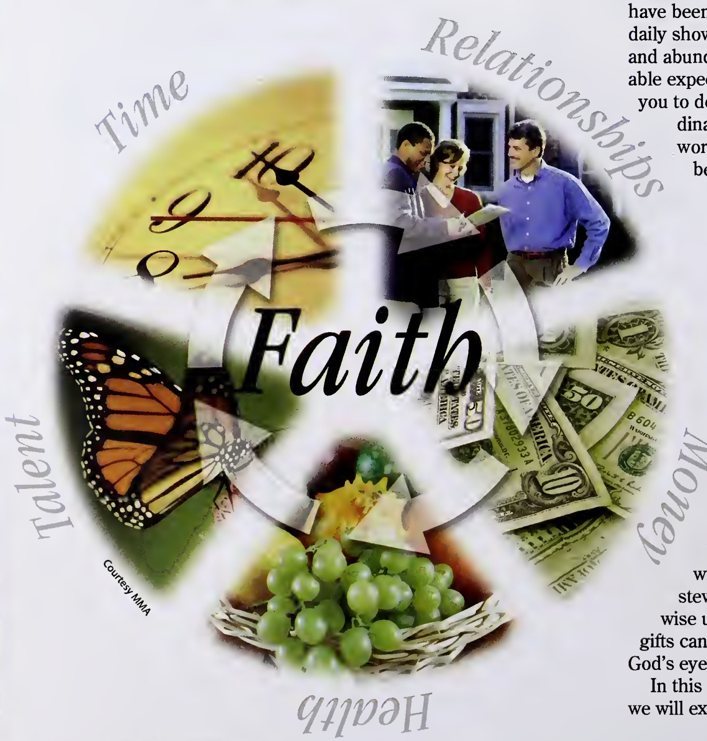
And why should God not expect our loyalty and devotion? He has freely granted us all things. We have been blessed with all true spiritual riches. He daily showers us with life and breath and health and abundance. Romans 12:1a gives us a reasonable expectation from God: "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: take your everyday, dinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering" (*The Message*).

Our life choices should reflect a good stewardship of the gifts we have eceived from the Father—in essence, God wants our giving to mirror his generosity to us. God is not content with just one piece of our heart—buying him off with our nickel. And since God gives so much more than just money, our giving should reflect much more than that as well.

3. The delicate interplay of the good stewardship of every area of our lives pleases God and yields us a harvest of joy.

MMA, a stewardship solutions organization based in Goshen, Ind., labels this interplay of every area of life with a descriptive investment term: holistic stewardship. It is an apt description of the wise use of our lives and gifts and how those gifts can be best managed for a successful life in God's eyes.

In this monthly series of articles on stewardship we will examine its relationship to life: to our



Courtesy MMA

Courtesy MMA

God wants our giving to mirror his generosity to us.

health, relationships, time, talent and money. We will see how critical it is that we realize how interconnected these arenas are and how strongly they influence our lives.

An auxiliary benefit from thoughtful stewardship is that the Christ-centered practice of exercising my gifts honestly and stewarding the relationships between them wisely brings me wholeness. I experience my design and purpose for life: something many of us chase but few catch. The balance between areas may not look the same at every stage (and should not), but it should reflect our best resources at every level. When I am younger, I have more time and health; when I am middle-aged, I have more discretionary income and stronger relationships; when I am older, I have more wisdom and experience. So I must learn to manage my time, talent and treasure to maximize effectiveness at every stage of life.

This healthy integration is critical to our overall well-being. If we focus on one area (such as money) to the exclusion of all the rest, we will suffer. For example, if our health is not guarded well, we will fail to give time as we wish. If our relationships break down, it will affect how much money is available. If our time is not given to God, then our relationships with others are limited. No longer is each area of life a compartment to itself; instead all are in intricate interaction. The delicate dance of our gifts gives life a beauty all its own and makes our stewardship of each gift sustainable over the long haul, no matter what comes our way.

Finally, as the parable demonstrates, it is this wise stewardship that helps us enter into the joy of the Master.

A prominent Christian author tells the story of a quiet, withdrawn 10-year-old boy named Chad. One January day he came home and boldly announced to his mother that he wanted to make a valentine for each student in his class. Chad was shy and ignored by the other kids, and his mom desperately wanted to save him from the disappointment of not receiving any valentines in return. Nevertheless, she purchased the paper and glue and crayons. For three weeks, night after night, Chad painstakingly made 35 valentines.

Valentine's Day dawned, and Chad was beside himself with excitement. He grabbed his carefully prepared treasures and bolted out the door.

That afternoon, when she heard the children outside, she looked out the window. Sure enough here they came, laughing. As always, there was Chad alone in the rear. She expected him to burst into sobs as soon as he walked in the door. His arms were empty, and when the door opened she could hardly keep back the tears. "Mommy has some cookies and milk for you."

But he barely heard her words. He marched right on by, his face aglow, and all he could say was, "Not a one. Not a one."

Her heart sank.

Then he added, "I didn't forget a one, not a single one."

Chad learned that day that true giving brings back untold blessing. Sacrifice in its highest form—giving our time, talents and expense without the expectation of anything in return—brings great internal satisfaction. When we learn to give like that, we will receive a commendation from God himself, "Well done, good and faithful servant." We become an accurate reflection of his giving heart.

Roy E. Bronkema is a free-lance writer specializing in work for churches and Christian organizations. Roy and Nancy, his wife, reside in Niles, Mich. Next month's article will explore the holistic stewardship of health, maximizing the gift of strength.

Associated resources

MMA is a stewardship solutions organization dedicated to promoting holistic giving through its expertise in insurance, financial services, charitable-giving programs and fraternal benefits. It can help people manage their God-given gifts in a variety of ways:

- Educational resources available at http://bookstore.mma-online.org
- "Holistic stewardship" presentation that can be given in churches (call your MMA regional office for more information)
- Local representatives throughout the country offering insurance and financial products and services
- Local MMA Stewardship University events (look under education and resources at MMA-online.org for the latest schedule) —*Roy E. Bronkema*

MMA today

Interim president Steve L. Garboden offers updates on MMA.

by Judy Martin Godshalk

Last September, the MMA Board of Directors asked Steve L. Garboden to take over interim leadership of MMA. Skip Nagelvoort had just resigned after serving as president since Aug. 1, 2005.

Since then, church members have asked about what's happening at MMA today and where it's headed. When you ask Steve about serving as MMA's interim president, you first hear one response: "I've greatly appreciated all the support given to me by the church community. Your encouragement, prayers and well wishes show deep respect for MMA."

While interim president, Steve continues to serve in his previous role as senior vice president of health and administrative services—although he quickly notes he's receiving extra help from other staff members in juggling these roles. He came to MMA 29 years ago "because it was a chance to use my math and business skills in the church," he says.

We have a healthy financial base, so MMA is moving forward on long-term goals established two years ago.—Steve L. Garboden

What changes in services or goals are on the horizon? "I assume we won't make major changes because we don't need to," says Steve. "We were left a strong legacy" by former MMA president Howard Brenneman, he says. Brenneman served MMA for 14 years until July 2005.

"We have a healthy financial base, so MMA is moving forward on long-term goals established two years ago," Steve says. "For example, we're expanding our mutual fund family, we're exploring new banking services and we're developing new stewardship of health resources. We want to help more people live a faithful life with their resources."

These established long-term goals, says Steve, have kept the organization moving forward. In assessing the organization today, he adds, "people in the field and home office are carrying on business as usual everyday."

Judy Martin Godshalk is a writer for MMA in Goshen, Ind.

Raymond and Lynnette Krauss and their family went through financial difficulties after getting hit with high medical, home repair and utility bills. The Michigan family received some extra funds to help them through this tough time from their church and MMA's Sharing Fund program.

MMA: business or church agency?

In his new role, Steve Garboden has already been asked if MMA is moving toward becoming more of a business and away from its church roots. He answers that question below:

The pull between church and business is an age-old tension for MMA but a good one. On the business side, do we treat church members and institutions as our customers? Yes. Are we constantly upgrading our professional expertise? Yes. Do we use business practices and services? Yes. So are we becoming just another business? No.

It's a matter of priorities. What's most important to MMA is our mission of Christian stewardship, not making money. For us, money is not an end but a means.

I see MMA as a church organization that uses business tools to reach our ultimate goal of helping the church, its members and institutions apply faith values when making resource decisions.

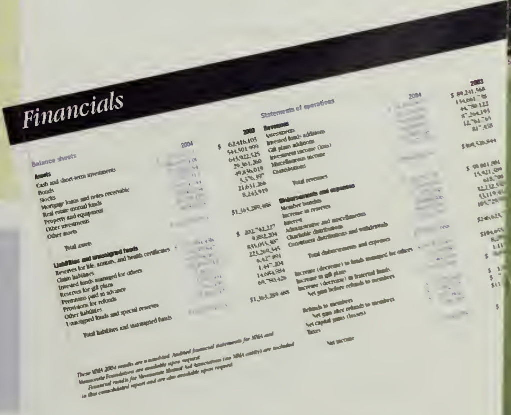
The tension between business operations and church mission at MMA can be healthy. It pushes MMA toward "becoming the best of business and the best of the church," as Howard Brenneman, former MMA president, used to say.

In my experience, MMA has been able to keep priorities straight because of feedback from our board, church leaders and the broader constituency. Fortunately, MMA has also attracted a steady stream of staff and field representatives who want to apply their faith and values to their careers—just like I did 29 years ago.—*Judy Martin Godshalk*

Online updates

To follow MMA's presidential transition and selection process, watch for updates in the News at MMA section of MMA-online.org or call 800-348-7468, ext. 388.

Also find out who is on the MMA Board of Directors and senior management team by visiting the organization's online What is MMA? section or by calling the phone number above.—*Judy Martin Godshalk*



Financials

Coming of

The Mennonite seagoing cowboys

by Peggy Reiff Miller

Eugene Souder

Mennonite upbringing: Luke Bomberger cleans a cattle stall on the *S.S. Boulder Victory*, which delivered heifers to China in the spring of 1947.

Take a teenage Mennonite boy after World War II, put him on a cattle boat to Europe or China, stir him up with storms at sea, spice him with adventure and danger, bake him in the smoldering rubble of war, and what do you have? A recipe for the coming of age of a seagoing cowboy.

Many of today's Mennonites in their mid-70s and above are among the ranks of men and boys who delivered livestock to war-torn countries 60 years ago. These men put their faith into action to help bring healing and hope to a world torn apart. In the process, they learned much about themselves and the world in which they lived.

Many of today's Mennonites in their mid-70s and above are among the ranks of men and boys who delivered livestock to war-torn countries 60 years ago. These men put their faith into action to help bring healing and hope to a world torn apart.

The call for these seagoing cowboys, as they were dubbed, came from the Brethren Service Committee of the Church of the Brethren. In 1943, the BSC birthed the ecumenical Heifer Project (today's Heifer International). The idea of sending cows rather than powdered milk to people devastated by war came to Brethren peace activist Dan West while he was serving alongside Mennonite and Quaker relief workers during the Spanish Civil War in 1938. Inspired by West's idea, Brethren farmers had hiefers ready to send by the time World War II ended in Europe in May, 1945—but they had no ships on which to send them.

age on a cattle boat

Elmer Bowers

Nearly 1,000 Mennonite men and boys, ages 16 to 60-plus, responded over the two years of the UNRRA shipments that began July 24, 1945.

Doing it for service: Cattlemen care for horses en route to Greece on the *S.S. Adrian Victory* in October 1946.

Another agency was formed in 1943 by 44 nations to help war-depleted countries get on their feet again—the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Unlike the Brethren, UNRRA had vessels available for the 200,000-plus head of livestock and other relief goods they planned to ship—but they had no hustlers to herd their horses, hiefers and mules across the ocean. The problems of both agencies were solved when BSC agreed to provide cattle attendants for UNRRA shipments and UNRRA agreed to provide shipping space for Brethren hiefers.

BSC extended an invitation to the Mennonites and other denominations to join them in this venture. Nearly 1,000 Mennonite men and boys, ages 16 to 60-plus, responded over the two years of the UNRRA shipments that began July 24, 1945. One of the first Mennonites to go was Luke Bomberger of Mount Joy, Pa. (now of Lititz).

"I arrived by train in New Orleans the day the war was over (in Japan)," says Bomberger. There he and three other Mennonites joined the nine-member cattle crew on the S.S. Charles W. Wooster, headed for Greece. They left Aug. 15, 1945, with a load of 335 horses. "I was 17 when I left and had registered C.O. [conscientious objector]. I turned 18 on the trip. When my draft board found out from my parents what I was doing, they said I could keep on doing it for my service." Bomberger made nine trips before UNRRA disbanded in 1947.

BSC sought cowboys of high moral principles who could be good ambassadors for the church. For those who fit the bill, life among the seasoned salty seamen came as quite a shock. "These men could be pretty hard characters," says Bomberger. He credits his Mennonite upbringing for helping him cope in this environment. "My church and family had instilled in me an understanding of proper Christian behavior, which made it easier not to be intimidated."

"The trips were an unbelievable opportunity for a small town boy," Bomberger says. Work on his Aunt Katie's farm and other farms and businesses in his hometown equipped him with the background he needed. The long hours of feeding and watering the livestock and shoveling manure in the stuffy, smelly ships' holds was hard and sometimes dangerous work. "Horses could be mean," he says. A mark on his back from the bite of an excited mare is one of his souvenirs.

Other dangers lurked in the waters. "Off Greece," Bomberger recalls, "we could see mine sweepers blowing up mines in the water ahead of us that we could have hit." On another trip, his ship lunged into a sharp turn. He ran to the rail

Continued on page 16

'Couldn't believe what we were seeing': The city of Danzig (now Gdansk), Poland, was obliterated in World War II and was still piled with rubble a year after war's end.

Charles Shenk

Continued from page 15

and saw a mine the ship had missed. "It was so close I could have spit on it," he says.

Seasickness was a malady many cowboys experienced. "Those are the times you wish you'd die, you felt so bad," says Eugene Souder of Grottoes, Va. "And you fed the fish."

The weather often created hazards. Ships ran aground or collided with other ships in dense fogs, got stuck in ice in the severe Baltic winter of 1946-47 and were tossed around like corks on angry seas. "We ran into a storm about the second day out," says Lee Jost of Harrisonburg, Va. "It was so stormy it washed some of the horses off the top deck."

It is a miracle that of the 73 UNRRA cattle ships, which made a total of 360 trips, only one was lost—and that one to a mine in the harbor of Trieste, Italy. The crew was saved, but the cargo was lost.

If the dangers were known ahead of time, it was the invincibility and naiveté of youth and the commitment of older men to the purpose of their trips that led them to sign up for the journeys. For their service they were paid one cent per month by the Merchant Marines to make them legal members of the ship's crew, plus $150 per trip by UNRRA.

Any unpleasantries of the trips were far outweighed for most cowboys by their shore leave experiences. Don Klippenstein of Goshen, Ind., speaks for many when he says, "The entire episode broadened my view of the world." Touring the Acropolis or walking the roads Paul walked in Greece, standing atop the Great Wall of China or gliding through Venice on a gondola brought history to life.

Many Mennonite cowboys who went to Poland looked up Mennonite churches there. Al Meyer of Goshen vividly recalls being inside a demolished Mennonite church building. "On the wall you could still see a tablet in honor of the brave men who gave their lives for the German Fatherland in the First World War," he says. "It was sort of symbolic to see the wreckage of the Second World War and a bombed-out Mennonite community of which there were no remaining people."

The German-speaking Mennonites had to flee Poland at the end of the war, leaving behind Bibles, hymn books and other books and records in their destroyed churches and homes. Mennonite cowboys took on the mission of retrieving books and documents from the rubble. These items can be found in many of the Mennonite historical collections around the United States.

By far the most indelible impressions made on the cowboys were those left from the aftermath of war, especially for those who went to Poland. "We just couldn't believe what we were seeing," says Charles Shenk of Harrisonburg. "A year after the war, most of the streets (in Gdansk) were still just piles of rubble. We saw almost no young men. It seemed like a generation was gone. You'd see people crawling up out of the rubble. They were living down there. I couldn't imagine what these people had been through."

The cowboys witnessed the extreme poverty created by war. Lee Jost recalls a boy coming onto his ship. "Down in the galley somebody dropped something. This kid got down and ate it off the floor; he was that hungry."

"I remember the immediate reaction of people on the pier when a horse fell," says Ron Graber of Nashville, Ind. "People rushed out from the shadows of the dock and cut it up. That was a lot of meat."

Battlefield scenes sobered the cowboys. "To us young teenagers just off the farm from very sheltered lives, it was quite an eye opener," says Earl Rosenberger of Harrisonburg. "There were skeletons in uniforms still lying around, and war materials and a lot of wreckage and damage." The most sobering experience of all, however, was had by the cowboy crews who toured the Nazi experimental research facility near Gdansk, where they saw vats of human body parts, melted human fat used

A lot of cowboys involved, if you follow their lives, have gone into wonderful mission outreach projects.
—Charles Shenk

for soap making, and dried human skin used for leather.

"The sights of Gdansk certainly made an impression on a lot of the young cowboys," says Shenk. "These trips must have contributed to all of us in regard to wanting to be peacemakers. How grateful I am for the invitation to be involved in something that then contributed to our lives like nothing else ever could."

"A lot of cowboys involved, if you follow their lives," says Shenk, "have gone into wonderful mission outreach projects." Gandhi Award winner Robert O. Epp and the late Melvin Gingrich and John Howard Yoder are just a few prominent Mennonites who served as seagoing cowboys. You may find that someone in your congregation did, too. If so, their story will be worth hearing.

Peggy Reiff Miller is a member of the Church of the Brethren living in Milford, Ind. She has been researching the history of the seagoing cowboys for over three years and is working on a historical young adult novel and a nonfiction book on the topic.

Buy Nothing Day 2005 (Black Friday)

by Britt Kaufmann

I live the lesson of my stock:
In the world, not of it,
shun the material for the other life.

A child, my grandfather jumped the fence
from Amish to Mennonite
(still a subset yet set apart).

Now I am grown with children
missing the four part a capella Sundays,
but today I do my grandmas proud.

I cook the picked-clean turkey carcass
with onions, salt, and celery,
boil it long and slow,

crack a bone or two, so
marrow seeps into the stock,
passes down the rich value of blood.

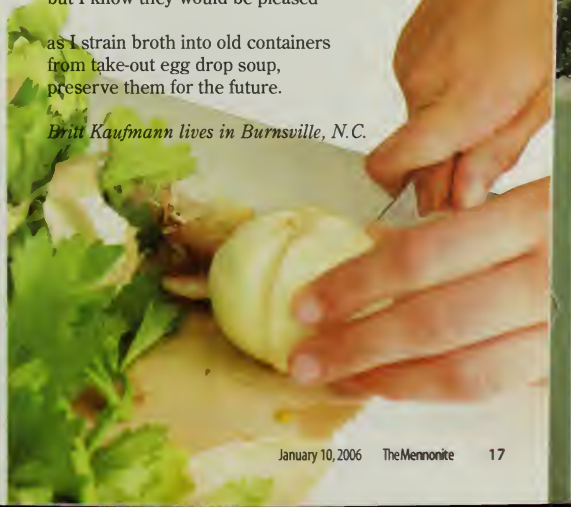
Each generation of this Thanksgiving
meal sustains family.
I add the heart, neck, and innards too

instead of tossing them out.
Those women never threw anything away,
cupboards overflowing with old margarine tubs.

I feel their smiles, short
ones that might not seem to merit praise,
but I know they would be pleased

as I strain broth into old containers
from take-out egg drop soup,
preserve them for the future.

Britt Kaufmann lives in Burnsville, N.C.



The four-fold formula of ministry

James Schrag is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

I was fascinated by the newspaper headline "MDS Can't Take All Who Want to Serve on Gulf Coast." A subheading read, "Shortages of space, long-term workers and supplies limit hurricane response" (*Mennonite Weekly Review*, Dec. 19, 2005). I nodded. Volunteers are only as effective as the long-term workers and their resources that support them.

The Mennonite Disaster Service formula is similar to other ministries in the church. At the practical level, ministry is effective only when we have all the following: space, supplies, volunteers and long-term workers. Even in a volunteer-rich ministry like MDS, volunteers cannot minister without the other three elements. The same is true in congregations.

This principle also applies in varied proportions to schools and mission programs. Office space, storage space and living space for long-term workers are needed. Training literature and people equipped to train others are essential. Technology in computers and people who know how to operate and repair them is a necessary fixture of ministry today. And resources, all kinds of resources, are indispensable—the most basic being money, which sustains both volunteers and life-long workers.

When any part of the four-fold formula of ministry lags behind the other parts—lifelong workers; space out of which to live and operate; resources, starting with money, or volunteers—ministry is curtailed and people are not assisted or taught or evangelized or prepared to be in ministry themselves someday.

The past year exceeded all others in memory with its extraordinary demands for special financial and material contribution. Many people volunteered. Tsunamis and hurricanes dare not be ignored and should not be soon forgotten. But we are learning some lessons, too. Our focused response to catastrophic need can produce an insidious, at first hidden, effect on our larger capacity for Christian ministry. If our response to immediate need causes us to ignore the four-fold formula for ministry—particularly the constant need to call and retain long-term workers in pastors, educators, writers, missionaries, organizers and administrators—the result circles back to adversely affect the capacity of Christian volunteers themselves.

Our focused response to catastrophic need can produce an insidious, at first hidden, effect on our larger capacity for Christian ministry.

It is my calling to care about maintaining this balance for ministry. The reason for our giving and serving should never be focused only in areas of current need or limited to our own capacities, as impressive as those may be. Individuals and congregations sometimes believe they can minister best by themselves. Or they assume they can shift their resources quickly from one area of ministry capacity to serve another with no effect returning to them.

A holistic understanding of ministry maintains the capacity for the mundane and the dramatic. Financial contribution to ministry should be more akin to the habit of brushing our teeth than to dressing up and going to a party. We will praise God for the marathon, long-term workers and give thanks for fleet-footed volunteers who sprint from place to place. We will not leave the motivation for ministry shabbily clothed, failing to supply the need for working space and technological support. Our view of ministry and those who carry it forth will not be narrow or only temporary. It will not only be focused at home or only overseas.

We have been granted an amazing trust. We are stewards of God's mission in Christ on earth. So remember the four-fold formula for effective ministry. Ignoring any part of it may produce salt that has lost its savor. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **What does it mean for a preK-12 school to be Mennonite-Anabaptist?**—Gloria Y. Diener
- **God's call for Mennonite education**—Carlos Romero
- **Making Jesus central in Mennonite education**—Gerald Biesecker-Mast

First MWC 'mini-assembly' in California

Pasadena is site of March 7-16 gathering for Mennonite World Conference.

Members of Mennonite World Conference councils from 55 countries will gather in Pasadena, Calif., March 7-16 to do business, mingle with the diverse Anabaptist-related community in southern California and with guests from other North American churches. In addition and for the first time, representatives of Global Church Congregations have been invited to join the meetings. GCC representatives will come from churches hosting or financially sponsoring an Anabaptist leader from Asia, Africa or Latin America whose churches cannot pay full travel costs.

During the nine-day event, MWC's General Council, Faith and Life Council and Peace Council will meet at William Carey International University, nestled at the foot of the San Gabriel mountains in north Pasadena. The WCIU campus is home to the U.S. Center for World Mission, numerous Christian ministries and nine churches. Many MWC participants will be lodged here.

Deacon consultation: A consultation on service—the deacon role of the church—will begin on March 7 and conclude at noon the next day. Ronald J. Sider, author, professor and lecturer from Pennsylvania, will be the featured speaker. The consultation, co-sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and MWC, will study what it means to be in service within and outside global Anabaptist-related churches. It will explore the biblical foundation of diakonia (service), share case studies, list principles and models to be tested by MWC member churches.

Pentecostal movement: The 100th anniversary of the Pentecostal movement in 2006 provides the impetus for a symposium on "Global Anabaptism and Global Pentecostalism: Creating Understandings" during the week. Fuller Theological Seminary and MWC will jointly host the March 13 event at the seminary.

Shared convictions: The Faith and Life Council will meet on March 13 to review global responses to the MWC "Shared Convictions" statement issued in Zimbabwe in 2003 (see box) and on March 14 will continue discussions on the significance of the Pentecostal movement for Anabaptist and other churches around the world.

Peace Council: Paulus Widjaja and Alan and Eleanor Kreider will lead Peace Council meetings based on their book *The Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church*, the 2005 selection for MWC's Anabaptist Shelf of Literature. The book was released last November.

Francophones and youth: The Francophone Network will meet March 8 and March 16, as will AMIGOS, the five-member youth committee that grew out of the Global Youth Summit in Zimbabwe in 2003. Activities with local youth are planned for March 11, at the Pasadena Mennonite Church.

Inviting North American churches to send representatives to these meetings is a new way of offering an opportunity to make connections at a kind of "mini-assembly." Participants will meet Anabaptist leaders from around the world and experience the diversity in local congregations from the three host conferences: Brethren in Christ (BIC), Mennonite Church USA and the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

The greater Los Angeles region has a large population of Asians, Africans, Latinos and new immigrants. About 90 percent of Mennonite Church USA members there are of non-European descent. On March 12, local churches will host MWC guests at their morning worship services and an afternoon worship service on the WCIU campus for all Mennonite and BIC churches in the area. Also on March 12, GCC reps will meet with North American denominational executives and MWC leaders to discuss how Mennonites and BIC congregations in North America can increase their global connections.—*Ferne Burkhardt for Mennonite World Conference*

Shared convictions of Mennonite World Conference members

By the grace of God we seek to live and proclaim the good news of reconciliation in Jesus Christ. As part of the one body of Christ at all times and places, we hold the following to be central to our belief and practice:

1. God is known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator who seeks to restore fallen humanity by calling a people to be faithful in fellowship, worship, service and witness.

2. Jesus is the Son of God who showed in his life and teaching how to be faithful, and through his cross and resurrection redeemed the world.

3. The church is a community of those whom God's Spirit calls to turn from sin, acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, receive baptism upon confession of faith and follow Christ in life.

4. The faith community, under Holy Spirit guidance, interprets the Bible in the light of Jesus Christ to discern God's will for our obedience.

5. The Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice and share our possessions with those in need.

6. The faith community gathers regularly to worship, to celebrate the Lord's Supper and to hear the Word of God in a spirit of mutual accountability.

7. We seek to live in the world without conforming to the powers of evil, witnessing to God's grace by serving others, caring for creation and inviting all people to know Jesus as Savior and Lord.

In these convictions we draw inspiration from Anabaptist forebears of the 16th century, who modeled radical discipleship to Jesus Christ. Walking in his name, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we confidently await Christ's return and the final fulfillment of God's kingdom.

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Aug. 17, 2003

Meeting in France embraces Africans

While cars burn in the streets, Mennonites gather to strengthen partnerships.

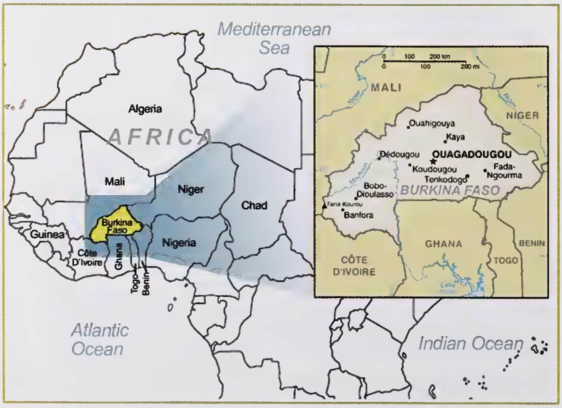
During a week when rhetoric from French officials toward immigrants of African descent flared as explosively as cars burning in the streets, Mennonites in the northeastern part of France welcomed delegations from Botswana, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Canada and the United States.

> Mission is being developed by the church [in Burkina Faso] rather than being driven from North America. This is a first.
> —Donna Entz

On Nov. 11, 2005, Jean-Paul Pelsy, president of the Comité de Mission Mennonite Français (French Mennonite Mission Committee), opened the week of meetings during which Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission's (AIMM) International Central Council met for the second time since the agency restructured its program two years ago. During the business sessions, the French Mennonite Mission Committee united with AIMM to become an official member of the Burkina Faso Partnership Council, joining four other agencies: the Église Évangélique Mennonite de Burkina Faso (Burkina Faso Mennonite Church), Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Church Canada Witness and the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in the United States and Canada.

AIMM personnel built fraternal relationships in 10 area Mennonite churches. They found that many of the congregations were working with African youth in their neighborhoods. Though Africans in many French cities had rioted to protest racial injustice, there was no sign of violence in the Mennonite communities.

Four national AIMM partnership councils, in various stages of organization, also met to write their mission statements. A partnership council makes countrywide decisions. Each church or agency active in a partnership council has the right to a representative on the International Central Council that provides an accountability structure, a legal framework and services such as fund-raising and advocacy.



This work continued a reconfiguration begun in June 2004, when African Mennonite leaders and representatives of North American mission agencies met to make changes so more administrative functions would reside in Africa.

"Although AIMM's new structure still has a lot of shortcomings, I see signs indicating that African leaders are being increasingly empowered to shape their own future," says Rod Hollinger-Janzen, AIMM's executive coordinator.

The expense and difficulty of scheduling travel on the African continent contributed to AIMM's decision to convene the International Central Council in France. French Mennonites gave logistical support; they procured visas for participants, arranged accommodations and supplied transportation to and from airports.

The Burkina Faso Partnership Council, whose ministry has been primarily in villages, finalized plans for a venture into urban mission in the capital city, Ouagadougou. In addition to addressing the spiritual needs of urban non-Christians, Mennonite leaders in Burkina Faso want to reach out to their own youth who move to the cities to attend high school and university. They believe the church is losing their successors to other denominations when there is no Mennonite church near these institutions of higher learning.

By the beginning of the 2007 school year, the partnership council hopes to have a Mennonite dormitory and church in Bobo Dioulasso, the country's second largest city.

"This way of working together feels right," says Donna Entz, mission worker through AIMM, Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness in Burkina Faso since 1978. "Mission is being developed by the church [in Burkina Faso] rather than being driven from North America. This is a first."

The Congolese partnership council, dealing with a complex situation that brings together three Mennonite denominations, worked at forging a common vision.

"We live together and we must be open and willing to share with each other," said Adolphe Komuesa, president of the Communauté Mennonite au Congo (Mennonite Community of Congo). The embryonic partnership councils of Botswana and South Africa also discussed which institutions should be invited to become members.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

Anabaptist leaders go to Washington

Council of moderators and secretaries prepares for possible military draft.

Leaders from five Anabaptist denominations met in Washington in December 2005 to address the U.S. government on several matters. The possibility of a military draft by the Selective Service System was a primary agenda.

The Council of Moderators and General Secretaries (COMS) kicked off its 2005 annual meeting at Washington City Church of the Brethren on Dec. 1. Washington was selected for the meeting so the group could talk directly with members of U.S. Congress and the Selective Service.

The council includes Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church USA, Brethren in Christ Church, Conservative Mennonite Conference and U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. Staff from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)U.S. were also invited to attend the meeting. Staff members from Church of the Brethren's Witness/Washington Office and the Washington Office of Mennonite Central Committee coordinated the meeting.

A portion of the meeting focused on the issues of alternative service and the potential of a military draft. In other meetings, the group met with leaders of the Faith-Based Initiative for the White House, the National Association of Evangelicals and the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund.

The council also visited with staff of Rep. Charles Rangel (D-New York) in his Capitol Hill office. Rangel, who did not vote for the use of force in Iraq, proposed a draft bill in January 2003 that was voted on and almost unanimously defeated. This past year, Rangel introduced the draft bill again, this time with changes to the conscientious objector language.

Richard Flahavan and Cassandra Costley from the Selective Service System met with the group.

"When you read the signs," Flahavan said, "you can see there's really no secret plan to fire up the draft. You can all be confident it's not going to happen."

However, Costley said she has had numerous meetings with various religious groups to work out guidelines for alternative service if a draft is implemented.

"We welcome any assistance from religious organizations in finding suitable employment for these conscientious objectors," she said.

But not everyone is so certain a draft will not occur.

"I think we have all the elements of a perfect storm, and all we need is a butterfly flutter," said J.E. McNeil, executive director of the Center on Conscience and War.

Church of the Brethren

At the White House (from left): Ben Shirk, Conservative Mennonite Conference; Jim Schrag, Mennonite Church USA; Chuck Buller, U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches; Ronald Beachley, Church of the Brethren; Roy Williams, Mennonite Church USA; Phil Jones, Church of the Brethren; J. Daryl Byler, Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office; Titus Peachey, MCC; Rolando L. Santiago, MCC U.S.; Steve Swartz, Conservative Mennonite Conference

McNeil said she believes President Bush might implement a draft if he thought it would pass through Congress.

"'We have no choice,' that's the phrase he's going to have to use to sell it," she said.

"No one in the administration is talking about a draft," said Theo Sitther, lobbyist for the center. "But people in the Pentagon are."

That is one reason McNeil believes it is important to continue to educate and provide alternatives for people faced with the possibility of a draft.

The COMS group discussed whether to develop a contingency plan for a military draft, led by MCC U.S. staff members Rolando Santiago and Titus Peachey. Some of the issues raised were alternative service placements under church agencies and nonchurch agencies, support for registrants, staying in relationship with soldiers, relationship of the churches to the government and Selective Service, and collaboration with other historic peace churches and the Center on Conscience and War.

Marian Franz, executive director for the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, spoke with the group about her work lobbying on the peace tax issue.

COMS also met with Richard Cizik, vice president for governmental affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals, who reviewed a publication outlining seven principles for Christian political engagement. In a meeting on faith-based initiatives, Jim Towey, director of the Faith-Based Initiative for the White House, explained President George W. Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative Plan.—*Marathana Prothro for Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Dennis Srader

Men from South Hutchinson Mennonite Church replace part of the church roof as part of a service project for the congregation's 40 Days of CommUNITY. From left: Ken King, Gary Pope, Jim Yoder and Joe Miller

Church has 40 days of commUNITY

Projects include fixing cars, landscaping and ministry for single parents.

Members of South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, Kan., have a newfound appreciation for what it means to live and serve as a community. The Mennonite Church USA congregation recently completed a journey of 40 days of CommUNITY based on Rick Warren's book *Better Together: What on Earth Are We Here For?* As a result of the project, the congregation welcomed 10 new small groups, filled a school bus with more than 2,000 items for 17 local charities and explored new ways to reach out to and serve people in their community.

Lead pastor Howard Wagler said though some may not readily support Rick Warren or his other book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, the congregation was able to use *Better Together* to build on Anabaptist and Mennonite themes—especially community and servanthood.

"The book fit right in with what we wanted our people to experience," Wagler says. "From the very outset, every small group was encouraged to have a mission inside the church and outside the church."

Among other things, the mission projects included a "garage no sale," a car ministry where people in need could have their automobiles checked out and, in some instances, fixed free of charge, landscaping cleanup at an emergency children's shelter and companionship for local seniors.

"We've done a pretty good job to go around the world and serve there," Wagler says. "But we've got to work on the needs of people right here in our neighborhoods, too."

> We've done a pretty good job to go around the world and serve there. But we've got to work on the needs of people right here in our neighborhoods, too.
> —Howard Wagler

Because the neighborhoods include a range of ages, the "40 Days of CommUNITY" project provided something for everyone at the church. That means adult and children's Sunday school classes focused on the same themes and verses each week; those themes and verses were also highlighted in sermons and small groups.

"There's higher impact when we're all on the same thing," Wagler says.

Children's pastor Sheri Saner says the children enjoyed and learned a lot from the process.

"Our kids did some unique things," Saner says. "They made craft projects and filled bird feeders for the seniors at Mennonite Manor. It was fun for them to see new ways they can serve people."

In addition, older children used money collected during Sunday school to make a trip to the local ALCO store to shop for items to donate and stuff the bus.

"This gave them an awareness of what other people don't have and what would be suitable and helpful for them in their daily lives," Saner says.

Mission project coordinator Ann Franz says the program wasn't without its difficulties, and there were times it looked as if certain aspects weren't going to happen.

"It was amazing because two weeks before we were supposed to have a bus to fill, I didn't have a bus for us to fill," Franz says. "But then God was like, "'OK, I'm going to take care of this,' and He did. We were able to get a bus from the Nickerson school district, and that need was met."

Things like that, she says, encouraged her to know God had a plan for the work the congregation was trying to do. The work they did—learning to reach out together, fellowshipping together, growing together, serving together and worshiping together—blessed the congregation.

Sunday morning attendance reached a new milestone during the "40 Days of CommUNITY," Wagler says, and some of the ministries developed during the process, such as a ministry for single parents, will continue.

"This showed us how easy it is to just get out and serve others, and now that we know, we can continue serving," Franz says.—*Marathana Prothro of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

One Vietnamese leader still imprisoned

Last of 'Mennonite Six' could be released during Tet New Year on Jan. 29.

Mennonite and other agencies around the world are again seeking the release of the last of the imprisoned "Mennonite Six" Vietnam Mennonite Church leaders. Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA have contacted Vietnam government leaders and various diplomatic personnel.

Pham Ngoc Thach, 34, will complete his two year prison sentence in March. Supporters hope that the government might release him before the Jan. 29 Tet New Year celebration, a time when Vietnam traditionally grants amnesty to prisoners. Observers say this would be an opportunity for Vietnam to show its goodwill. They note that the government has taken concrete steps this past year permitting greater religious expression.

Thach was arrested after a March 2, 2004, incident when church personnel attempted to report undercover agents who had been harassing them. He and five others were convicted by a court of interfering with officials carrying out their duties and sentenced to varying prison times.

Thach was sentenced to two years. Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang was sentenced to three years, but was granted amnesty in August 2005. Church leaders in Vietnam believe that the prison terms were intended to punish church leaders for some of their other activities. Quang had been documenting and publicizing police harassment of some house churches, and Thach videotaped some of these activities.

Thach has been an assistant to Quang since 1993 and served as chair of the church's evangelism committee from 2001 until his arrest. He spent significant time in the central highlands in 2001, encouraging churches of ethnic minorities. Their activities were sharply restricted after large numbers of minorities protested because they pushed off their land and because their religious freedom was curtailed.

In December 2003, Thach was beaten and briefly held in Ho Chi Minh City at a time when house church members were being arrested for distributing unauthorized religious literature. Afterwards, when taking Quang home on his motorcycle after a meeting with an international human rights representative, Thach was stopped by security police and severely beaten before being released.

In the March 2004 incident, the beating by police officers left Thach unconscious. He suffered additional beatings during interrogation sessions the following weeks. Thach's father was not allowed to visit his son until four months later.

After Thach's court appeal was denied in April 2005, he was moved to various prisons. His father, Pham Van Khanh, visited him most recently on Dec. 17, 2005. Thach is assigned to farm work, cutting grass, hoeing and harvesting manioc and corn. He was experiencing back strain from carrying heavy loads. Letters and Christmas greetings he wrote to church friends were confiscated by the prison authorities in violation of the government's penal code.

Five people already released from prison have ongoing health problems, some of which are related to their incarceration. The brothers Nhan and Nghia, released last December, are only able to do light work. Phuong, released in March, is dealing with a fibroid tumor on his head. The mental health of Ms. Lien has improved significantly, and she is again able to smile.

Five people already released from prison have ongoing health problems, some of which are related to their incarceration.

Pastor Quang, who had health problems before this latest imprisonment, is seeking medical treatment. He again gives leadership to the house church in his home in Ho Chi Minh City, and he has traveled to central Vietnam to encourage the churches.—*Mennonite World Conference for Vietnamese Ministries*

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CALENDAR

Mennonite Central Committee, *Voices Around the Table: Faith, Food and U.S. Farm Policy*, March 5-7, Washington D.C. office. Seminar includes biblical reflection, advocacy training, a panel on farm subsidies from across the political spectrum and workshops on everything from free trade agreements to genetically modified crops to hunger in the United States. Early registration of $65 is due by Feb. 6. Visit www.mcc.org/us/washington/brochure.pdf for a brochure and registration.

WORKERS

Beidler, Ken, was ordained Nov. 6, 2005, at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City, Iowa.

Martin, Brian, was licensed Sept. 7, 2005, as pastor to serve Line Lexington (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Martin, Cheryl, was licensed Sept. 7, 2005, as pastor to serve Line Lexington (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Daniel Z., ended Nov. 30, 2005, as interim pastor at Marion Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Prey-Harbaugh, Julie, was licensed Oct. 19, 2005, to serve as chaplain at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (Pa.).

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Blough, Timothy Douglas, Dec. 3, 2005, to Chris and Angela Troyer Blough, Middlebury, Ind.

Dean, Mason Matthew, Nov. 14, 2005, to Michael and Tonya Brubaker Dean, Fisher, Ill.

Durso, Karigan Grace, Oct. 10, 2005, to Anthony and Kristi Schultz Durso, Westfield, Ind.

Fisher, Lincoln Joel, Oct. 28, 2005, to Matt and Amy Stuckey Fisher, Goshen, Ind.

Frey, Megan Diane, Nov. 18, 2005, to Fritz and Delila Miller Frey, Middlebury, Ind.

Friesen, Madison, Dec. 13, 2005, to Dave and Mary Friesen, Altona, Man.

Fultz, Nicholas Gene, Sept. 22, 2005, to Matthew and Malinda Cameron Fultz, Indianapolis.

Gingerich, Andrew Jacob, Dec. 5, 2005, to Peter and Kris Yoder Gingerich, Granger, Ind.

Gingerich, Emily Jo, Oct. 24, 2005, to Merlin and Rhoda Mullet Gingerich, Millersburg, Ohio.

Hixon, Brynne Lanae, Dec. 12, 2005, to Bill and Karena Miller Hixon, Goshen, Ind.

Kliewer, Vivian Rose, Dec. 11, 2005, to Chris and Cara Eshelman Kliewer, Wichita, Kan.

Larimer, Emma Marie, Nov. 3, 2005, to Mark and Trixy Carr Larimer, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Leinbach Kreider, Jessie Daniel, Dec. 13, 2005, to Jonathan and Greta Leinbach Kreider, Harrisonburg, Va.

Lutz, Madgalyn Grace and Mary Catherine (twins), Nov. 21, 2005, to Doug and Cher Moyer Lutz, Sellersville, Pa.

Mavis, Brayden Isaiah, Nov. 5, 2005, to Jason and Darla Mavis, Goshen, Ind.

Mbuu, Lillian Campbell Mumbi, Nov. 17, 2005, to Brian and Joela Campbell Mbuu, Harrisburg, Pa.

McLaughlin, Colin James, Dec. 7, 2005, to Sean and Julie Wagler McLaughlin, North Canton, Ohio.

Michael, Raven Presley, Nov. 28, 2005, to Jeremiah and Sara Martin Michael, Wheat Ridge, Colo.

Moser, Ava Marie, Nov. 4, 2005, to Joshua and Lisa Akin Moser, Carthage, N.Y.

Nyveldt, Briana Shae, Nov. 1, 2005, to Al and Sheila Miller Nyveldt, Bainbridge, Pa.

Parker-Harley, Lucia Grace, Nov. 30, 2005, to Michael and Jennifer Parker-Harley, Columbus, Ohio.

Renner, Austin James, Dec. 5, 2005, to Christopher and Heather Renner, Sellersville, Pa.

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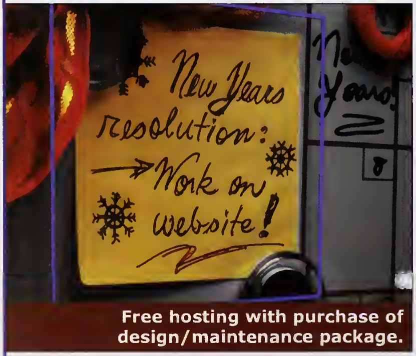

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Gayle Gerber Koontz, Ph.D.; June 5–16
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Marlene Kropf, D.Min; June Alliman Yoder, D.Min; July 31–August 11
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Rice, Landon Charles, Dec. 4, 2005, to Shawn and Susan Grau Rice, Lowville, N.Y.

Rush, Carley Grace, Oct. 5, 2005, to Ken T. and Tricia Tufton Rush, Sellersville, Pa.

Schrag, Eden Olivia, Nov. 17, 2005, to Steve and Meghan Frankenfield Schrag, Sellersville, Pa.

Showalter, Lexi Grace, Sept. 11, 2005, to Brian and Michele Showalter, Olathe, Kan.

Souder, Adam Zachary, Nov. 24, 2005, to Jeff and Carrie Kipps Souder, Massanutten, Va.

Springer, Katherine Lynn, Dec. 9, 2005, to Douglas and Mary Siegrist Springer, Hopedale, Ill.

Todaro, Lauren Elyse, Nov. 30, 2005, to Jim and Alice Todaro, Wilmot, Ohio.

Troyer, Brooke Erin, Dec. 12, 2005, to Brian and Jessilyn Blocher Troyer, Sturgis, Mich.

Weaver, Aliyah Dianna, Sept. 24, 2005, to Daniel and Krystal Whiman Weaver, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Wenger, Faith Elizabeth, Nov. 10, 2005, to Tony and Melinda Shoemaker Wenger, Manheim, Pa.

Witmer, Nathan Luke, Sept. 7, 2005, to Philip and Terry Phibbs Witmer, Dayton, Va.

Yoder, Alex Michael, Nov. 20, 2005, to Kenneth and Marci Litwiller Yoder, Hopedale, Ill.

MARRIAGES

Douple/Eby: Kent Douple, Ephrata, Pa., and Sarah Eby, Ephrata, Nov. 26, 2005, at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Hershberger/Preston: Abby Hershberger, Mogadore, Ohio, and Nahum Preston, St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 26, 2005, at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Jones/Shannon: Robert Jones, Fort Wayne, Ind., and Linda Shannon, Fort Wayne, Oct. 15, 2005, at Faith Baptist Church, Fort Wayne.

Miller/Miller: Irma Miller, Winesburg, Ohio, and John Henry Miller, Mt. Eaton, Ohio, Nov. 26, 2005, at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Correction: In the Dec. 20, 2005, issue, Harley Stucky was incorrectly listed as Harold Stucky.

Beckler, Neomi Schweitzer, 80, Wood River, Neb., died Nov. 28, 2005. Spouse: Raymond Beckler (deceased). Parents: John and Matilda Stutzman Schweitzer. Children: Candace Schweitzer, Ed, Randy, Ellen Sebulsky; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 3 at Wood River Mennonite Church.

Bontrager, Roman M., 90, Beach City, Ohio, died Nov. 28, 2005. Spouse: Fannie Miller Bontrager (deceased). Parents: Moses E. and Mattie Miller Bontrager. Children: Ella Nafziger, Mary, Roy, Andy, Ron; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 2 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Winesburg, Ohio.

Brydge, Katherine Lucille, 96, Staunton, Va., died Nov. 20, 2005. Spouse: Paul R. Brydge (deceased). Parents: Grover C. and Emma Goldie Neff Bell. Children: Barbara Lee Tomlin, Judy Via, Patty Lafferty, Wilda Mae Morris (deceased). Memorial service: Nov. 22 at Lynside Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va.

Detweiler, Alvin F., 76, Boyertown, Pa., died Dec. 3, 2005. Spouse: Katherine Kass Yoder Detweiler. Parents: Mahlon and Hannah Freed Detweiler. Children: Twila Nazario, Philip, Leona Kolb, Steven, Douglas, Suzi Weiss, Kenton, Aleta Kulp, Carol Smith, Marc, Karla Moonsamy, Krista; 33 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Boyertown Mennonite Church.

Detweiler, Mary Jane Rudy, 79, Lansdale, Pa., died Dec. 1, 2005. Spouse: Richard Clemmer Detweiler (deceased). Parents: James and Alma Rudy Groff. Children: Donna Louise, John Richard, Ann Elizabeth; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 4 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Homes.

Dueck, Mary, 93, Altona, Man., died Dec. 7, 2005. Spouse: Jacob B. Dueck (deceased). Parents: Jacob J. and Helena Peters Fehr. Children: Henry, Jake, Brian, Leona; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

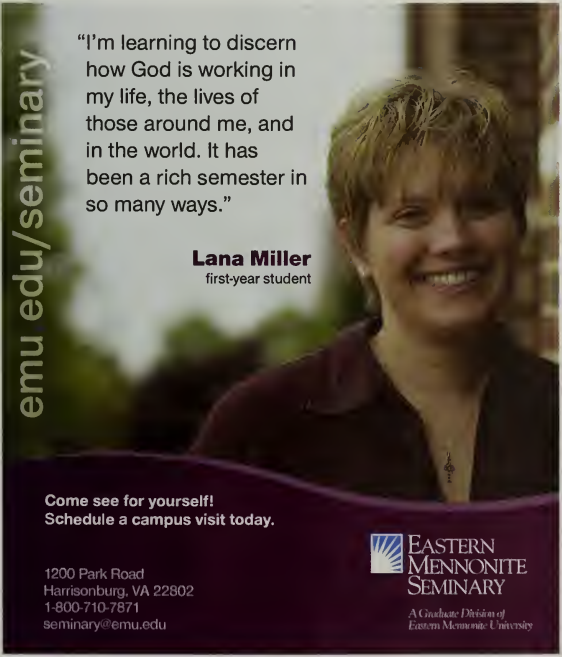
Ediger, Eleanor Voth, 92, Inman, Kan., died Dec. 10, 2005. Spouse: Ben Ediger (deceased). Parents: Cornelius H. and Elizabeth Sperling Voth. Children: Warren, Donovan, Donna Smith; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 14 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Hackman, Vandala F., 88, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 9, 2005. Parents: Morris and Maggie Freed Hackman. Funeral: Dec. 13 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Hilty, Paul, 88, Dalton, Ohio, died Nov. 28, 2005. Spouse: Edna Nussbaum Hilty. Parents: Benjamin and Edith Snavely Hilty. Children: Kenneth, Emma Jean Yoder, Christine Welfley, Alice Metcalf, Leon; 17 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Histand, Esther D., 87, Souderton, Pa., died Sept. 30, 2005. Spouse: David L. Histand (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Ellen Brunner Detweiler. Children: D. Merrill, Joanne Marie D. Histand Hackman, Dennis; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 5 at Rockhill Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.



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Kehler, Henry, 96, Altona, Man., died Dec. 3, 2005. Spouse: Hilda Kehler. Parents: John and Katharina Kehler. Children: Myron, Arlene Jardine, Ingrid Heide, Bernice Heinrichs; 14 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 8 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Klippenstein, Laura, 71, Altona, Man., died Nov. 29, 2005. Spouse: Alfred Klippenstein. Parents: Henry J. and Helena Kroeker Braun. Children: Michael, Deborah Fehr, Terry, Nelson, Jim; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 3 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Martin, Gladys Good, 77, St. Jacobs, Ont., died Dec. 6, 2005. Spouse: Lloyd S. Martin. Parents: Abner and Mary Ann Randall Good. Children: Ron, Darrel, Sharon; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Martin, Lydia G., 81, Ephrata, Pa., died Nov. 28, 2005. Spouse: Allen Martin (deceased). Parents: Phares G. and Susie Gehman Martin. Children: Lawrence, Larry, Linda Woodhouse, Twila; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Hammer Creek Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa.

Mast, Alma Schmucker, 90, Creston, Ohio, died Sept. 29, 2005. Parents: Peter and Druscilla Kurtz Schmucker. Children: Earl, Paul, Clara Swartzentruber; 15 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 3 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Winesburg, Ohio.

Mayer, Doris, 79, Sarasota, Fla., died Nov. 24, 2005, of cancer. Children: Sandra Miller, Bonnie Kurtz, Michael; 16 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 28 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Miller, Leander Lee, 85, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 3, 2005. Spouse: Etta Frye Yoder Miller. Parents: Nathaniel and Mary Miller. Stepchildren: Rosemary Newton, Treva Yoder, Danette; eight step-grandchildren; six step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 6 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Neuhouser, Merle W., 89, Leo, Ind., died Nov. 27, 2005. Spouse: Mary Gardner Neuhouser. Parents: Levi and Katie Liechty Neuhouser. Children: Lynne Kurtz, Sue Pownall, Donald, Kathy Brown; seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 2 at North Leo Mennonite Church.

Sauder, Floyd H., 95, Archbold, Ohio, died Dec. 13, 2005. Spouse: Huldah Baer Sauder (deceased). Parents: Albert and Ida Weaver Sauder. Children: David, James, Sandra; nine grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold.

Showalter, Kenneth L., 80, Wilmot, Ohio, died Nov. 28, 2005. Spouse: Joan Weaver Showalter. Parents: Luke and Lydia Showalter Kauffman. Children: Eileen Yoder, Eli; six grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Winesburg, Ohio.

Smoker, Simon, 93, Lititz, Pa., died Nov. 13, 2005. Parents: John and Emma Zook Smoker. Children: Mervin, Carol; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 18 in Lancaster, Pa.

Stutzman, Lela M., 94, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 2, 2005. Spouse: Perry Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Wesley C. and Emma Yoder Stutzman. Children: Delores Headings, Marva Blough; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 5 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Weirich, Eli S., 75, Shipshewana, Ind., died Oct. 25, 2005. Spouse: Ruth Ellen Weirich (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Millie Bontrager Weirich. Children: James, David, Robert; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 29 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Wenger, Linden M., 92, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 18, 2005. Spouse: Esther Huber Wenger (deceased). Parents: Oscar E. and Bessie P. Heatwole Wenger. Children: Harold C., J. Lowell, Linda Kay; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va.

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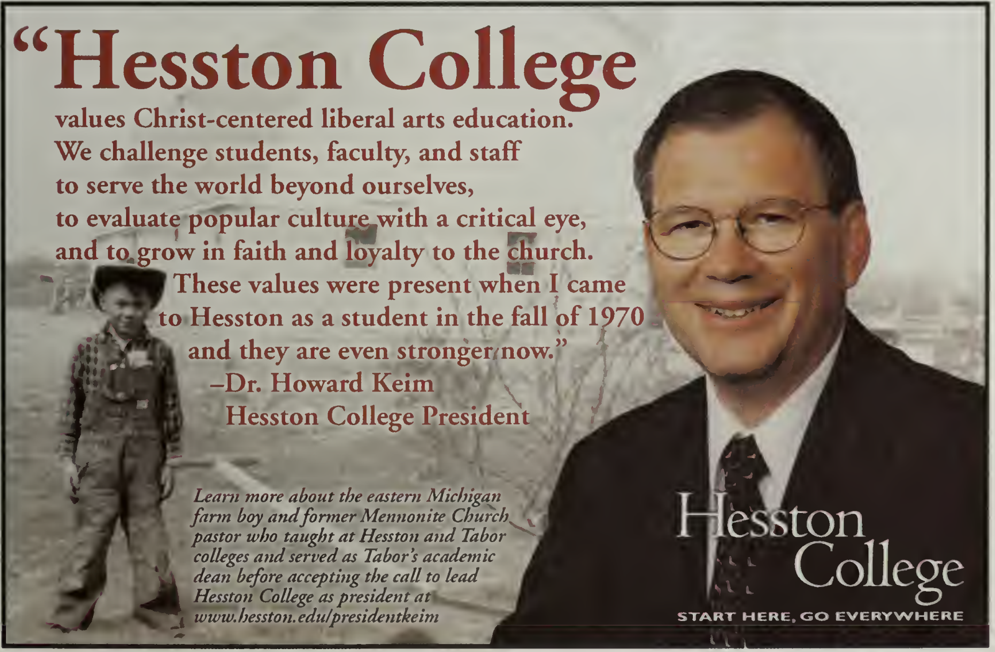

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Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks ***four event pastors***, two male and two female, for !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth. The position is full-time for one of two sessions: June 12-July 19 or July 6-Aug. 3. These pastors will accompany the high school !Explore participants for their intensive 18-day group experience. Qualifications include experience as a congregational pastor and working with youth; ability to nurture youth through times of spiritual, intellectual and emotional growth; creativity in styles of worship, prayer and spiritual disciplines; knowledge of and commitment to the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and an undergraduate degree, with additional seminary education preferred. Responsibilities include assisting in preparations, leading and directing worship and discussions, and being present with youth during this experience. To apply, send resumé and letter of application by Jan. 31 to Andy Brubacher Kaethler, !Explore Director, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, andybk@ambs.edu. A complete job description is available on the AMBS Web site: www.ambs.edu/!Explore.

Eastern Mennonite University announces ***full-time, continuing faculty position in chemistry*** beginning Fall 2006. Ph.D., teaching and research experience required. Courses include introductory, general, physical or analytical chemistry and/or courses in the General Education program.

Applications accepted until position filled. Applicants are asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission. (Provided after initial inquiry). Send letter of application, curriculum vita, graduate transcripts (unofficial acceptable), statement of teaching philosophy, statement of research interests and names of three references to Dr. Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; www.emu.edu. Review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. Applications will be acknowledged by letter. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Hinkletown Mennonite School is seeking a ***visionary administrator*** to lead the school into a new era of providing a Christian education to students in northeastern Lancaster County, Pa. HMS is a K-8 school that offers a quality academic education within the context of an Anabaptist interpretation of the Christian faith. Interested people are invited to contact Kristine Sauder by Feb. 1, 2006. Please address communications to 464 E. Maple Grove Road, Narvon, PA 17555. Phone 717-445-9215 or email ksauder@frontiernet.net.

Hesston College seeks a ***chief academic officer*** to replace Dr. Marc Yoder, who is retiring. Qualifications include commitment to Anabaptist distinctives, understanding of and commitment to the mission of Hesston College as the two-year college of Mennonite Church USA with both transfer and professional programs, completed doctorate and demonstrated ability to lead collaboratively with faculty and other areas of campus. Beginning date: July 1, 2006. Review of applications and interviews begins Feb. 1 and continues until position is filled. Send letter of application, vita and original transcripts to President's Office, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. For more information, email cindyl@hesston.edu. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

Holly Grove Mennonite and Rehoboth Presbyterian Churches, Westover, Md., seek candidates for the position of ***full-time youth pastor***. These two churches have been jointly supporting one youth pastor for the past six years and desire to continue that relationship. The youth pastor will facilitate and oversee the continuation of an established community youth ministry to high school students. Candidates should have a growing passion for their Christian faith, respect for working in an ecumenical environment, love of youth and the ability to work in a team ministry. Salary package in keeping with Mennonite Church USA guidelines. Experience in youth ministry preferred. Interested people should send resumé and cover letter to Verle Brubaker, 7333 Mennonite Church Road, Westover, MD 21871.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***director of marketing services***. Responsibilities include preparing and implementing an integrated marketing communications plan for the university, including Web-based media, branding, news dissemination, crisis communications management, budget planning, scheduling of work, assurance of quality control, long-range planning and staff supervision. Bachelor's degree in marketing, communication or equivalent experience required. At least five years in one or more of the following fields is required: Web expertise, mass media communications, marketing, publishing, graphic design, public relations or related areas. For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email hr@emu.edu. The search committee will begin reviewing applications immediately. The search will continue until the position is filled.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is inviting applications for the full-time position of ***director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee***. The director will provide overall coordination and direction to the heritage and history work of the Historical Committee and develop program and vision that will enhance the life and spirit of Mennonite Church USA.

Responsibilities include interpreting and telling the church's story, initiating and coordinating history and heritage programs, fund raising, supervising staff and archives operations in Goshen, Ind., and in North Newton, Kan., managing a budget, networking with regional heritage organizations and overseeing/editing the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*.

Qualifications: commitment to Mennonite Church USA and its mission; passion for the church's stories; visionary; storytelling ability, strong communication skills in person and through writing; management and supervisory skills; fund-raising experience/ability or willingness to learn; ability to inspire and motivate; equally at home with the various heritage streams and ethnic/racial groups of Mennonite Church USA.

Send resumé with references to Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Archives, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen IN 46526.

Interviews will begin Feb. 1, 2006, until the position is filled.

Managing editor for ***Leader***, a quarterly magazine published by Mennonite Publishing Network for pastoral and lay leaders in Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. The managing editor would be expected to work with the senior editor and the editorial committee in choosing themes for each issue, solicit and edit articles for each issue and manage issues through to production, including working with a copy editor, proofreader and designer. The managing editor would also be expected to work within the budget and be available as a resource for the promotion of Leader. Candidates for this position should have both editorial experience and congregational leadership experience (lay or pastoral), some awareness of Mennonite Church Canada or Mennonite Church USA or both, and should be an active member in good standing of a Mennonite congregation in one of these two constituencies. To apply, send a letter of application, with a resume and writing and/or editing samples, by Feb. 3, 2006, to Eleanor Snyder, director, Faith & Life Resources, Mennonite Publishing Network, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C7, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7 or esnyder@mph.org. The letter of application should include a statement about why this position is of interest and relevant gifts, skills and experiences one brings to it, as well as three references (with addresses, phone numbers and email address of references).

Tabor College seeks ***full-time faculty*** starting August 2006 for positions in psychology, Bible, secondary teacher education, athletic training program director and sociology/social work. Doctorates preferred. Passion for mentoring and advising undergraduate majors. Must affirm Tabor distinctives as an Anabaptist Evangelical Christian college and articulate personal Christian commitment. Complete position listings at www.tabor.edu. Send a letter of interest to Dr. Lawrence Ressler, VP of Academics, Tabor College, 400 S. Jefferson, Hillsboro, KS 67063.

Celtic Treasure: Daily Scriptures and Prayer by J. Philip Newell (Eerdmans, 2005, $20) provides a retelling of a Scripture passage and original prayers inspired by the Celtic tradition for each day of the week. Over seven weeks, it covers the arc of Scripture, from the stories of creation and Israel through the life of Jesus and the New Testament letters.

Probity Jones and the Fear Not Angel by Walter Wangerin Jr. and illustrated by Tim Ladwig (Paraclete Press, 2005, $16.95) is a Christmas tale that reads contemporary but feels a part of the old story of Bethlehem.

Does God Ever Sleep? by John Sauro (SkyLight Paths, 2005, $8.99) answers one of the many questions children ask about God. It addresses children ages 3-6.

Praying With Our Feet by Lisa D. Weaver (Herald Press, 2005, $12.99) is told from the point of view of a young girl who takes part in a walk for peace, along with her parents and members of her church. It includes a score of a song by the author and an afterword for adults by Tonya Ramer Wenger.

Moving with Compassion is a 10-minute video or DVD from Mennonite Central Committee that explores the work of MCC and its partners in Uganda, Saskatchewan, Brazil, Chad and the United States. It is available for free loan from MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-500. Also available on video or DVD for free loan is **Gifts to Share**, which looks at school kits, relief kits, health kits, newborn kits, AIDS care kits and comforters.

Becoming Anabaptist: The Origin and Significance of Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism by J. Denny Weaver (Herald Press, 2005, $15.99) is a second edition of the book that first appeared in 1987. It was the first major study to incorporate the new history of multiple beginnings and a diverse Anabaptism into a synthesis of meanings for the late 20th century.

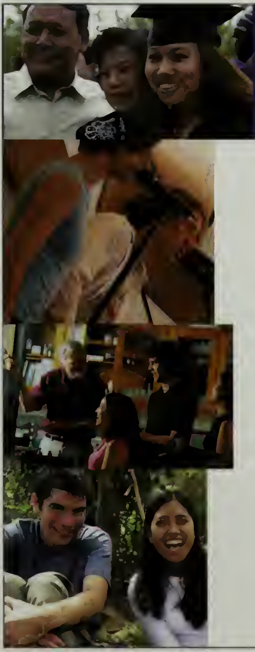
Echoes of the Word: Theological Ethics as Rhetorical Practice by Harry J. Huebner (Pandora Press, 2005, $25) helps the Christian community reflect with greater clarity on its theological and ethical agenda. It is part of the Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies Series.

Purpose, Evolution and the Meaning of Life: Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Goshen Conference on Religion and Science by John F. Haught, edited by Carl S. Helrich (Pandora Press, 2005, $15.50), includes Haught's lectures on cosmic purpose and evolution plus questions and comments from the audience.

The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural by John Milbank (Eerdmans, 2005, $20) defends de Lubac's claim that all human beings are naturally oriented toward the supernatural.

The Nazareth Jesus Knew by J. Philip Newell (Nazareth Village, 2005, $16.95 or $29.95 plus shipping and handling) explores through photos and text what Nazareth looked like during the three decades Jesus lived there and illuminates how this setting inspired and shaped Jesus' life-changing stories of love, mercy and compassion. Ordering information is available at NehemiahGr@aol.com.

A Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church by Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider and Paulus Widjaja (Good Books, 2005, $9.99) suggests how to develop "peacemaking reflexes," how churches "can learn to handle conflict well" and how to cultivate vulnerability and humility.



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—Margaret Haire, Evansville, Ind.,
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What's in a name?

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name.—Ephesians 3:14,15

Sara Wenger Shenk is an author and serves as associate dean and associate professor of Christian education at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

How are we named? In what sense are all families named by God? Is it because we owe our existence to God? Is it because in some mysterious way, all families in the cosmos reside within the reign of God?

I write about families not because I'm an expert in family studies but because I'm a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother, a practical theologian who wants theology to connect with everyday realities. I'm also a lay ethnographer who loves to watch people in the complexity of their relationships, within the web of forces that name them—their walls, loves, enemies, celebrations and work, trying to understand how it is that we take our name from God.

I like using the metaphor of bread for describing families. There are many kinds of bread, many varieties of ingredients, many shapes, colors and textures. Yet there is something consistent about good bread. It is full of flavor, chewy, nourishing and satisfies one's hunger. And it is all named bread.

Can we hold up ideal family dynamics while showing grace and hospitality to other ways of being family?

Our cultural wars, however, include huge debates about what we name as family. Is our definition of family descriptive of what is? Or is it ideological—what should be? Is our definition biblical? If so, what in the world does a "biblical" family look like? Like Abraham or Moses' families? Like David, Esther or Hosea's families? Like Paul or Mary Magdalene's family?

How do we regard diversity of family forms? Is the diversity a merciful provision of God or evidence of everyone doing what is right in their own eyes? Can we hold up ideal family dynamics while showing grace and hospitality to other ways of being family? On what basis do we make judgments about what is healthy in family relationships? Do we begin with the Bible and make authoritative statements based on revealed truth? Do we begin with societal indicators of basic mental health or economic security? Do we begin with reality on the ground and work pragmatically to make the best of what is?

The answers are not simple, but they work themselves out in real life—with trial and error, abundant grace, new beginnings, a socially embodied experiment in faithful living—generation after generation, in real families named by God.

Here's a real family I know well, somewhat fictionalized: Charles was the youngest son of an evangelist and college administrator—an innovator in his day. Susanna was the daughter of urban business entrepreneurs. She was conceived out of wedlock. When the pregnancy was discovered, the couple was asked to make a public confession.

Charles and Susanna shared their first kiss on their engagement after a three-year courtship. They were married one Sunday morning in 1944 at a city church, with no pomp or circumstance. They raised a family of eight children. Life together included Bible stories, garden work, camping trips, regular participation in church, much love and song. Raising teenagers in the 1960s and '70s was tough, and many prayers emerged from Mom and Dad's room right before the reassuring snores, reliable as clockwork.

One daughter married a farm-grown Mennonite, immediately moved to a major city and partnered in the formation of a house church. Another daughter married a divorced veteran, becoming a Quaker and a vegetarian by conviction. Another married a Conservative Mennonite and devoted her life to mission work. Another married and immediately joined her husband in seminary studies and teaching. One son married the daughter of a bishop, worked in education and business and, though affirming faith, rarely attended church. Another son, abruptly expelled from the church because of his homosexuality, formed an enduring male partnership, becoming a business entrepreneur and civic leader. Another married a fellow Master of Divinity student with whom he became a co-pastor. Another served with Mennonite Central Committee and married a Japanese woman from a Buddhist family.

This family resembles many Mennonite families who've experienced increased diversity amid tremendous strain. Yet a consistent goodness has endured—full of flavor and profoundly nourishing—a goodness that is grounded in tenacious faith and resilient love, a goodness that intentionally roots itself in the saving mercy of God. In what respect does this family, and every family, take its name from God? "For this reason I bow my knees." TM

Real Families is a new column that will appear monthly.

Mennonite
Church
USA

Pete Prunes, Mereoda Babilonia
and their children Bianca, Jacob, Sierra,
and Isabel Prunes on a family outing at the
Philadelphia Art Museum.

Building up the church — by tearing down walls

It starts with embracing diversity – not only within the congregation, but also in how that congregation defines community. Take Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in northeast Philadelphia, where Pete Prunes and his wife, Nereida, have found their home. Neither comes from a traditional Mennonite background. And both are now actively involved in this diverse congregation.

Like many other Mennonite Church USA congregations, Oxford Circle is joyfully following Jesus into the world. They know it's "not just about Sunday." It is about love that comes from faithfully following Jesus. And about supporting each other every day, serving the community, opening doors to a new relationship with God. Today's Mennonite Church USA congregations are dynamic. And they are inviting new families – no matter where they come from or how they were raised – to see and serve the world from a uniquely Christian Anabaptist perspective.

Joyfully following Jesus *We* are Mennonite Church USA

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Everett J. Thomas

Stewardship surprises

Patterns of giving in the Mennonite church are changing rapidly. These patterns threaten the ability of Mennonite Church USA agencies to partner with congregations and area conferences.

Significant changes could occur in the next month as churchwide boards begin their new fiscal year on Feb. 1. Executive Leadership, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Publishing Network and Mennonite Education Agency are facing scenarios that include cutting both staff and programs (see "MC USA Is Facing Major Budget Shortfalls," Dec. 20, 2005).

The cause of the budget shortfalls is attributed in part to a shift in donor giving to disaster relief instead of to "nonemergency organizations," says Marty Lehman, director of financial development for Mennonite Church USA.

But there are other factors as well. A research project called "Research Study of Denominational Giving" and released on April 9, 2005, revealed important patterns among people under 40 and among racial-ethnic members. The finding: These Mennonites contribute a smaller portion of their total giving to denominational programs than does the average Mennonite Church USA member.

But the study had some surprises about the most generous givers in our church. It showed that while 60 percent of average members give 10 percent or more of their income, more than 88 percent of racial-ethnic members give 10 percent or more. In other words, racial-ethnic members are more generous than church members in general—a point Mennonite Church USA moderator Roy Williams says most people miss. He says there is a perception that racial-ethnic people are not giving, don't have money, are not generous and need to be helped by white congregations and individuals. The research shows that perception is incorrect.

The study also showed a troubling pattern: Only 41 percent of racial-ethnic members designate the majority of their giving to denominational ministries, compared with 66 percent for average church members.

A similar pattern emerged for members under 40. While the younger generations are surprisingly generous, only "48 percent say they give a majority of giving to a ministry of Mennonite Church USA," says the report.

The good news is that the part of our church growing the fastest is very generous. In addition, the youngest part of our church is generous, and "as respondents move toward 40, their propensity to give and at higher levels increases," says the report. The bad news is that both groups are less committed to Mennonite Church USA ministries when measured by where their money goes.

Jan. 15 is designated Stewardship Sunday this year. We start the new year pondering what these stewardship surprises mean for Mennonite Church USA and what changes are needed to tap into the surprising generosity of these two groups. One obvious answer: Mennonite Church USA and its agencies will need to make some changes to receive more support from them.—*ejt*

Mennonite Church USA will need to make changes to receive more support from racial-ethnic members and people under 40.

Fellowship with the poor

Members of the New Testament church pooled their wealth so no church member would be impoverished (Acts 4:32-37). It was a powerful witness in their Ancient Near Eastern world. Such sharing today among Mennonite World Conference sisters and brothers would be a similar witness in our world.

In the most recent issue of *Courier*, MWC executive secretary Larry Miller titles his back-page column with an exclamation and a question: "Eradicate poverty! Even in the church?"

"[We must] overcome the disaster of poverty in the church," Miller says, then describes the "enormous disparity in the MWC family of churches. The 72 percent of our membership who live in Africa, Asia and Latin America control less than 5 percent of our estimated wealth."

Mennonite World Fellowship Sunday is Jan. 22. But genuine, New Testament fellowship will not happen until we who are wealthy share our resources with Anabaptist and Mennonite brothers and sisters who are poor.—*ejt*

JAN 23 2006

The Mennonite

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connecting church, school and family

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holistic education

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Integrate salvation and shalom

Elaine Bryant is pastor of Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

Wording on a plaque presented to me last November by Mennonite Mission Network and the Urban Leaders Network spoke of "integrating evangelism with reconciliation and justice." For me those words were God's gracious way of calling attention to potential that awaits fuller actualization in and through my life, as well as in and through Mennonite Church USA and the whole church of Jesus Christ.

We proclaim the good news that the One spoken about in Psalm 72; Isaiah 9:6-7; 53:11-12 and many other Old Testament scriptures has not only come but has given commands that can actualize the potential for the integration in question. Three of that One's commands, in particular, when lived and promoted with focused intentionality by those who call Jesus Lord will holistically integrate evangelism with reconciliation and justice. Such intentionality will actualize the experience of shalom and salvation for individuals, families and communities.

At this time of great division in our nation, the three commands that holistically integrate evangelism with reconciliation and justice are the Golden Rule and the "new commandment" of John 13:34, as key points for what is known as the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15. The Golden Rule presents a way that is affirmed by most religious and philosophical traditions as being fair, equitable and wise. The "new commandment" was given by the Lord as the way for followers of Christ to authenticate the integrity of their claim to be his disciples.

With the new commandment, those who call Jesus Lord are taken to a higher standard of actions for love's sake. It is not enough to love others as oneself, admittedly hard. We are called to love to the point of sacrificing self-interest for the ultimate good of another or others. That is what the Lord did. He loved his heavenly Father and humankind sacrificially.

Of the ways of being Christian to which I was exposed in the first 46 years of my life, the Mennonite way—with its history and doctrinal affirmation of the doability of the Lord's way and teachings in this life, coupled with the emphasis on pursuing peace and social justice—seemed an authentic representation of the Golden Rule, the new commandment and the integration of biblically mandated evangelism with reconciliation and justice. I took being led to the Mennonite way as another example of a loving, all-knowing God's gracious way of leading one child to where they were created in Christ to be.

Because and in spite of experiences with representatives of the Mennonite way over the last 18-plus years, I still view it as the way with great potential to integrate evangelism holistically with reconciliation and justice within the church of Jesus Christ, this nation and the world. I cling in faith to the words of Paul in Philippians 1:6—"The one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion"—for me, the Mennonite way and the church of Jesus Christ.

I cling in faith because of God's faithfulness, grace and love in spite of our falling short in our obedience to the commands of Christ. I cling in faith because the Mennonite way still has grace time with God and credibility with many on the left and right of the religious and political spectrum. I pray we will not lose that grace period and will retain that credibility by resisting seductions to embrace political but not Christ-conformed correctness or put ethnicity, personal comfort or security above obedience to the Great Commission, the Golden Rule and the new commandment. Avoiding those seductions will help us be more fruitfully used by God to serve the church of Jesus Christ and the world in the integration of evangelism with reconciliation and justice for the actualization of shalom and salvation in this time in history. TM

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 2, January 24, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Cover photos courtesy Mennonite Education Agency

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 40033185, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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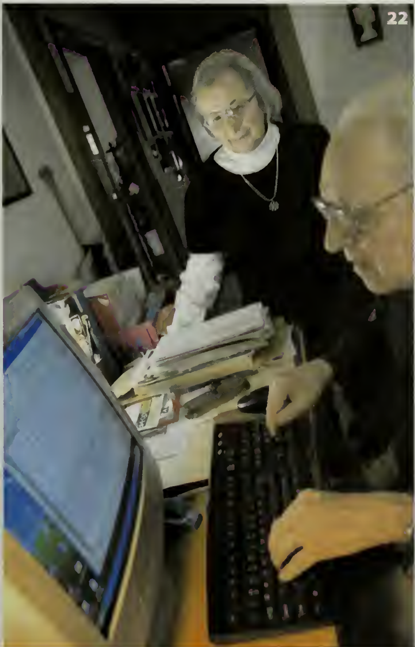

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Support seminary education

We hear reports that a growing number of Mennonite congregations are now without pastors. In the next 10 years, 1,000 Mennonite Church USA pastors will retire. Shouldn't we be concerned about the lack of interest in the ministry as a vocation? How many of us have tapped a person on the shoulder and encouraged them to consider exploring pastoral leadership? The Lilly Endowment—a company outside of the Mennonite church—realizes our predicament. They have granted both of our seminaries funds to bring together high school youth to explore the possibility of ministry as an occupation. These programs are called !Explore at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and LEAP at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

Mennonites are good and wise stewards of our God-given possessions. We are charitable to needs in our society and are able to expand our net worth by wise investments. But why are we hesitant to make an investment for the future of our church? We should not consider our seminaries charitable establishments but places for training church leaders—an investment for the future of our churches. AMBS is still short $2 million in their campaign to provide training for future pastors. Can we respond to a problem that affects the future of Mennonite Church USA?—*Allen Yoder, Jr., Middlebury, Ind.*

Honesty about war

In its "Statement on the War in Iraq," Mennonite Church USA says, "This is how we, as God strengthens us, choose to express our love," then eight things are listed. Why can't they at least be honest about it and add, "We will continue to do the only thing that makes war possible: we will pay for it."—*Daniel Slabaugh, Sturgis, Mich.*

Hyattsville follows Jesus?

I find it unfortunate that *The Mennonite* has given Melvin Schmidt a forum to criticize Allegheny Mennonite Conference in the article "Hyattsville Mennonite Church Follows Jesus" (Speaking Out, Dec. 20, 2005). First Schmidt mentions all the good things Hyattsville has done—seeming to suggest that we in Allegheny Conference should turn a blind eye to this concern that has arisen. The church does not and cannot operate this way. Second, the examples Schmidt calls upon with the murderers and the sexually abusive are interesting. In each of those cases, I would hope the churches do not condone that behavior. If they do, I would hope their conference would take some action. By using these examples, is Schmidt putting living in committed homosexual relationships on the same level as sexual abuse and murder? I'm sure he isn't, but if one were to follow his line of thought it would appear that way. Third, Schmidt calls us away from creeds and back to "recovering the part of the Anabaptist vision that did not put faith in the writing of creeds but looked toward following Jesus as the ultimate answer." The Anabaptist movement was not creedal, but it was clearly guided by confessions of faith—the first being the 1527 Schleitheim Brotherly Union. In this Brotherly Union and the confessions of faith that followed, the practicing of the ban was significant to who they were.

The decision of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church to welcome gays and lesbians in committed relationships and appoint some as delegates to conference and churchwide assemblies has been divisive in Allegheny Conference. In our attempt to follow Jesus as the ultimate answer, many of us see the Hyattsville Mennonite Church position to be unbiblical—something Jesus would not condone—and a destructive influence within Allegheny Mennonite Conference.—*Carl Geissinger, moderator-elect, Allegheny Mennonite Conference*

Re Melvin Schmidt's Speaking Out: I am troubled by his inference that being a part of "one of the most important Mennonite churches in our nation" entitles his congregation to be exempt from brotherly/sisterly discipline. Apart from what individuals may believe about the issue of homosexuality, I hope polity within the Mennonite church isn't based on how "important" individual

IN THIS ISSUE

The largest single enterprise in Mennonite Church USA—outside congregational life—is our network of church schools. As we observe Church Education Sunday on the first Sunday in February, we offer this annual issue to focus on the nearly 15,000 students enrolled in Mennonite Church USA-related church schools (see page 19). As enrollment in our schools continues to grow, the relationships between the schools and the church also change. Gerald Biesecker-Mast (page 14) offers a five-point proposal for the college-church relationship because those relationships "have often been stormy, shaped by mutual suspicion and fear and thus the source of pain and anger." Carlos Romero, executive director for Mennonite Education Agency, dreams about helping schools become even more essential to a missional church (page 12). There are also big issues for us to confront, including the needs of young people who are members of our urban congregations (page 20) and the needs of congregations trying to meet the needs of preschoolers (page 21).—*Editors* members or their congregations are. No doubt his members make significant contributions through their work. Their proximity to secular and religious power centers offers an unusual opportunity. However, it is condescending to suggest that the wisdom of more ordinary people and congregations is of less value. Truth can come from humble beings.—*Gerald W. Kaufman, Akron, Pa.*

I join Melvin Schmidt in grieving Mennonite Church USA's loss now that Hyattsville's gifted members are ineligible to hold elected positions in the broader church. I wish the congregation had trusted the discernment of their denomination and remained within the membership guidelines adopted with a 90 percent vote at the 2001 delegate assembly.

Congregations can follow their own conscience on an issue rather than the teaching position of the church. But surely they realize that taking such a stance may change how the church relates to them—especially when people in our denomination feel so strongly on a matter that they have gotten the church to affirm it three times in the last 20 years (Purdue '86 and Saskatoon '87 statements, Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, membership guidelines).

Schmidt is right that area conferences have an "inconsistency of practice" regarding the homosexuality issue; though they all exercise some level of discipline in this area, the levels sure do vary. But Schmidt went on to give the impression that area conferences that disciplined congregations over the issue may have changed their stance on the issue as they reinstated those congregations. My understanding is that in each case the congregations changed: At the very least, each chose to affirm the new membership guidelines. The one congregation expelled from an area conference and in 2004 received into another area conference would not have found a new home except for their willingness as a congregation to support the Membership Guidelines. The receiving conference was deliberate, even involving the disciplining conference in the process.—*Harold N. Miller, Corning, N.Y.*

Photo touched heart

Thanks to Everett J. Thomas for such a beautiful picture of the mother and child (Dec. 20, 2005, cover). I thought, What a beautiful baby doll. Those piercing eyes don't seem real. It touched my heart. I wonder where she is now?

Sometimes we forget that Jesus, too, was a child. He cried when he was hungry or when he was scared when darkness set in, but Mary and Joseph were so happy and at peace that they wanted Jesus to become our Savior. As I reflect on the picture of the little girl, I ask myself, Can I make a difference in her life or someone else's life today? —*Consuelo Ortiz Brenner, Spartansburg, Pa.*

Peter Dula's candor

I appreciated the candor of Peter Dula (Dec. 6, 2005) in saying that "thoughtful people don't know what to say about Iraq anymore." He says Iraqis want U.S. troops to stay (with conditions), and he distrusts some antiwar activists who "hate [President] Bush more than they love Iraq." It takes courage for Mr. Dula to break from the chorus of Mennonites, most recently lead by Christian Peacemaker Teams, who have called for an end to the U.S. occupation.

We speak with such conviction when the vast majority of us have never stepped foot in Iraq or spent time in the Middle East, whereas Dumas, who "has unique opportunities to listen to the Iraqi perspective about the war," says he has no answers. I pray that we who value peace and justice can spend more time listening to the voices of the oppressed (in this case the Shiites and Kurds) and less effort toward bold proclamations on complex issues that we may or may not understand. —*Joy Kauffman, Tiskilwa, Ill.*

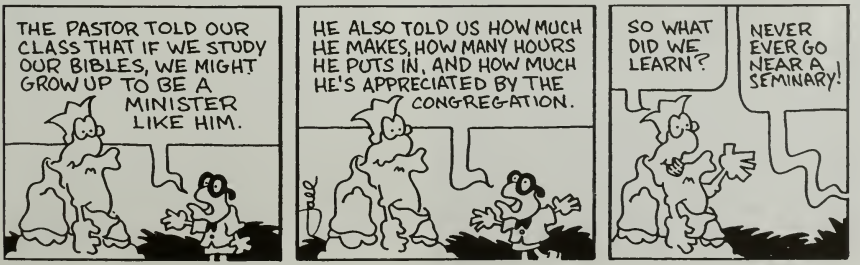
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I have attended a Mennonite school (75 votes):

- ○ Yes, 1-4 years (38%)
- ○ Yes, 5-10 years (26%)
- ○ More than 10 years (6%)
- ○ No (30%)

Check out the new poll question at www. TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


THE PASTOR TOLD OUR CLASS THAT IF WE STUDY OUR BIBLES, WE MIGHT GROW UP TO BE A MINISTER LIKE HIM.
HE ALSO TOLD US HOW MUCH HE MAKES, HOW MANY HOURS HE PUTS IN, AND HOW MUCH HE'S APPRECIATED BY THE CONGREGATION.
SO WHAT DID WE LEARN?
NEVER EVER GO NEAR A SEMINARY!

IN BRIEF

Harold Buller, pastor, chaplain, artist, dies at 83

Harold W. Buller, a Mennonite pastor, chaplain and artist, died in Beatrice, Neb., Jan. 4 at age 83. He served as pastor of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan., and First Mennonite Church, Beatrice. In 1960 he began a 35-year term as chaplain of Beatrice Community Hospital and Health Center. He wrote poetry, drama and did sculpting and woodworking. He is survived by his wife, Anne, of Beatrice; sons Paul and Glenn; daughter Mary Anne Triller; brothers Peter, Clarence and Henry; sisters Edna Gerber and Shirley Newman, and four grandchildren.

Conference to explore Native-Mennonite ties

"Cheyenne, Arapaho, Mennonite: Journey from Darlington" will celebrate and review the historical relationship and interconnected faith stories of the Native tribes and the first Mennonite mission begun 120 years ago when Mennonites were called as educators to the Darlington Agency in Oklahoma. The Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA is sponsor of the conference, which will be held March 30-April 2 in Clinton, Okla. Go to www.mcusa-archives.org for more information. *—Mennonite Church USA*

Israeli military arrests CPTers, takes computers

HEBRON, West Bank, Israel—At dusk on Dec. 29, 2005, an Israeli military patrol invaded the Christian Peacemaker Teams Hebron office and apartment for the fourth time in three weeks. Following its search, the patrol had the Israeli police arrest all five CPT workers present. After they were removed from the apartment, the office was forcibly entered, and four computers, one videotape, two cameras and three cell phones were taken, CPT reports.

Throughout December, the team had been documenting and filming home invasions by this six-man Israeli military patrol. After each time they filmed home invasions, soldiers invaded and searched the CPT apartment. CPT workers repeatedly asked to see the written orders for these searches, but soldiers never produced any.

At the CPT apartment on Dec. 29, the soldiers showed interest in a bowl of old sound grenades, used tear gas canisters, rubber-coated bullets and shells CPT workers had picked up from the streets. One soldier said the two or three dented cartridges constituted weapons, and possession of weapons in that part of Hebron is prohibited.

Stanley W. Green

Biking 1,800 miles to get a degree

Etim Akpan Usen heads the procession of Mennonite Bible College graduates accompanied by a church choir in Uyo, Nigeria. Over the past two years, Usen made 18 trips (50 miles each way) from his home in Ibianga Diocese to Uyo for week-long courses in biblical studies, Anabaptist theology, preaching and English. On Dec. 3, 2005, he joined 11 other graduates, the first leaders to be trained by Mennonite Church Nigeria.*—Mennonite Mission Network*

A second patrol of six Israeli soldiers, including the captain, arrived. The captain collected the passports of all five CPT workers present and called the Israeli police. The police arrested John Lynes, Sarah MacDonald, Rich Meyer, Grace Pleiman and Harriet Taylor.

While the five CPT workers were still being held at Kiryat Arba police station, CPT workers Art Gish and Kathie Uhler arrived at the apartment and found the street door open, the office door forced open and items removed. An Israeli soldier was posted on the roof of the house across from the building the entire time and would have witnessed an intrusion.

One hour later the five CPTers were released on their own recognizance.*—CPT*

Prison honors Hesston for Bible instruction

HESSTON, Kan.—When Palmer Becker, director of Hesston College's Pastoral Ministries program, walked into the general assembly room at Ellsworth (Kan.) Correctional Facility for his Christian beliefs class session with nine students Dec. 15, 2005, he received a surprise. The room included 200 other prisoners who are part of a renewal movement at the prison, while his students were standing in a cluster by the stage.

John Thomas, coordinator of the Advanced Studies Institute (ASI) at the Ellsworth facility, told the audience how much the nine students had appreciated the Christian beliefs class Becker taught that fall at the prison. Thomas presented Becker with a certificate that honors Becker for "his outstanding contribution to the advancement of God's kingdom."

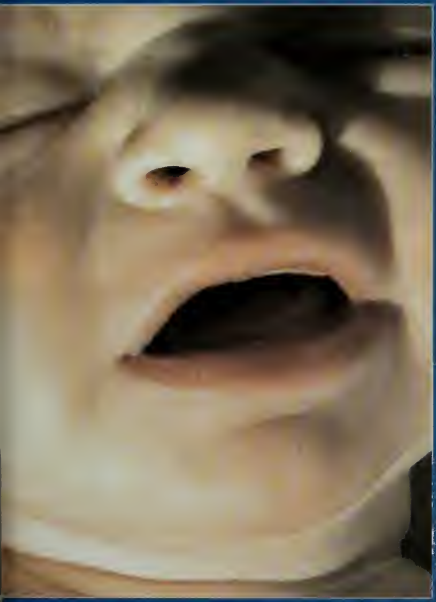
"This is the only prison where seminary studies are offered," Becker says. The goal is to prepare potential pastors for inner-city ministries.

The 200 other prisoners in attendance that day are part of the InnerChange Freedom Initiative. They're among 850 prisoners in the medium-security Ellsworth prison operated by the Kansas Department of Corrections.

Terry Simmons, a Pastoral Ministries student, presented Becker with another certificate of appreciation honoring the college for "faithful obedience to prepare men of faith to 'make disciples of all nations.'"*—Hesston College*

U.S. company asks Mennonites for money

WATERLOO, Ont.—Caobo (Word) Company, based in Everett, Wash., sent a letter Dec. 16, 2005, to 15,700 people with the last name of Dyck, Enns, Epp, Friesen, Janzen, Thiessen or Willms.



Courtesy photo

Precious in a different light

This video still is from Liz Nofziger's installation "Precious," on display in the exhibit "Homecoming" in the Hershberger Art Gallery in Goshen College's Music Center from Jan. 8 to Feb. 15 along with sculptures by Greg Stahly. Nofziger, who is from rural Paoli in southern Indiana and graduated from Goshen in 1996, is a Boston-based multimedia installation artist; she received a master of fine arts degree from Massachusetts College of Art in 2004. Stahly, who grew up in Goshen, where his parents still reside, is a 2001 graduate of Goshen and received a master of fine arts degree from Indiana University in Bloomington in 2005.—*Goshen College*

About half went to Canada and half to the United States. In the letter, CEO Paul H. Willms and President Boris Tankhilevich propose a Ukrainian land investment plan.

Appealing to Mennonites of Ukrainian descent ("I ask you to join me now in honoring God by helping restore the Mennonite lands in Ukraine"), he proposes to ask the Ukrainian government for ownership of 3 million acres once farmed by Mennonites for private development by Caobo. Those receiving the letter are asked to invest in this plan with a minimum $1,000 U.S. stake.

Mennonite Church Canada and David Sudermann at Friends of the Mennonite Centre Ukraine have both expressed their opposition to this plan.—*Canadian Mennonite*

Peace churches consider Asian consultation

STRASBOURG, France—An international group of Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren met last month to discuss how historic peace churches can share their insights on peacemaking with Christians around the world.

The group met Dec. 5-9, 2005, in Bali, Indonesia, to consider organizing an international peace consultation in Asia in 2007. The event would be the third in a series of international consultations organized by historic peace churches.

The consultations are a response to the World Council of Churches, which declared 2000-2010 a "Decade to Overcome Violence" and encouraged historic peace churches to share their insights on peacemaking with other Christians.

Two previous international peace consultations were held in Bienenberg, Switzerland, in 2001 and Nairobi, Kenya, in 2004.

The meeting in Bali brought together 14 members of historic peace churches in Indonesia, India, Japan, Australia and the United States. The group appointed a committee to consider organizing an Asian peace consultation in 2007 and determining the location and date.

The committee will post information on this peace consultation when it becomes available at www.peacetheology.org.—*Tim Shenk*

Mennonite writer, polio survivor dies at 97

WESTMINSTER, Colo.—Marie Flaming Rupp, a Mennonite writer and believed to be one of the country's oldest survivors of polio, died Dec. 26, 2005. She was 97.

Her struggle with polio began in 1911, at age 2. Her parents—Peter Flaming, minister of Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan., for 60 years, and his wife, Agnetha—took her by horse and buggy to rub doctors to try to get her to walk. In 1933, she graduated from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Marie Flaming Rupp

Rupp frequently attended Mennonite conferences, most recently the Mennonite Church USA Convention in Atlanta in 2003, where she was honored as the oldest participant at age 94.

Thirteen years ago she moved to Denver, where she attended First Mennonite Church. Services were held there and at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

College presidents getting a bundle

"In 1995, only four [U.S.] college presidents had salaries and benefits worth more than $500,000 [per year]," writes Colman McCarthy in *National Catholic Reporter*. Now it's 50, with five topping $1 million. "Even at second- and third-tier colleges, presidential enrichment programs thrive," he writes. *—National Catholic Reporter*

'The Gift of Quilting' on display

A new exhibit at Kauffman Museum, North Newton, Kan., recognizes the historical, cultural and artistic value of quilting in Mennonite communities. It's also the first time the museum has had a special exhibit focusing on historic quilts. "The Gift of Quilting" showcases 18 quilts Mennonites have donated to the museum over the years. Many of these have never been displayed publicly. An exhibit brochure describes each quilt's history and design. Guest curator for the exhibit is Karrie Peterson, a senior at Bethel College in North Newton from Pella, Iowa, who will graduate in May with a degree in history and social science. Graphic designer for the exhibit is Julie Miller, a 2005 Bethel graduate. The exhibit is on display through Jan. 27, then will be rehung Jan. 31-March 5.—*Bethel College*

What does it mean for a preK-12 school to be Mennonite

Holistic education: Students in Bethany Christian School's environmental science program paint storm covers in their neighborhood with "Please Don't Pollute."

Anabaptist?

An interview with educator Donovan Steiner

by Gloria Y. Diener

What does it mean for the church to provide preK-12 education that is decidedly Mennonite-Anabaptist?

It means providing education that is invitational. In the Mennonite-Anabaptist tradition, church and school come together to invite young people to learn for a higher purpose. We model our invitation after the one given by Jesus: Here is a higher calling. Here are higher values. Here is a place that will teach you to serve others well.

Albert Meyer, who headed the Mennonite Board of Education of the former Mennonite Church, once said that education is a conversation between generations. I agree. A commitment to Mennonite education means a commitment to continuing conversation with the next generation about core values. Such conversation is more than passing on tradition; the interaction will inspire young people to be participants and agents of transformation.

In what ways do Mennonite-Anabaptist schools offer education different from that of public or other Christian and private schools?

In the early '90s, I did an analysis of the distinctive qualities of preK-12 Mennonite-Anabaptist schools. What I found was a particular set of qualities:

Service: Mennonite schools have a track record of teaching and modeling the importance of service. In nearly every Mennonite preK-12 school, an emphasis on service emerges throughout the curriculum and in hands-on, co-curricular activities.

Witness to peace and commitment to restorative justice: Mennonite schools consistently place an emphasis on peace and reconciliation in words and actions.

Connection between church, school and family: The three institutions have many and strong connections and are viewed as partners.

Music: An emphasis on singing and music in Mennonite schools is universal and grows out of the love of music in the Mennonite community.

Holistic education: Mennonite educator Paul Zehr has noted that Mennonite education refuses to separate mind and spirit and instead follows a Hebraic philosophy of educating for life rather than only for performance. Mennonite schools place high priority on education that values community and discipleship.

Invitation: A distinctive feature of Mennonite education is that it steers clear of indoctrination. Mission statements of Mennonite-related schools reflect invitation and student choice in response.

Ethics: Mennonite schools function from a set of ethics that are not communicated directly. Instead we take seriously the fact that education is a moral enterprise, and we work hard on this in the context of the Sermon on the Mount and the teachings of Jesus. Our understanding of these ethics permeates the curriculum.

In the Mennonite-Anabaptist tradition, church and school come together to invite young people to learn for a higher purpose.

Courtesy Mennonite Education Agency

Sarasota (Fla.) Christian middle schoolers paint a community building during their 2004 service project.

Continued on page 10

Courtesy Mennonite Education Agency

Kindergarten teacher Marcy High with student Veronica Lopez, Locust Grove Mennonite School, Lancaster, Pa.

Continued from page 9

What are some of the challenges our schools face in their commitment to provide a Mennonite-Anabaptist educational experience?

Because we tell an invitational story, we increasingly have students and teachers from different communities and backgrounds who have accepted the invitation and come to study and teach with us. They come because they find that our way of following Christ compels them, and they identify with and share our value system.

Teachers who come to us are expected to teach from our perspective. Many have little background in Mennonite-Anabaptist education, little opportunity for formal education about Mennonite community and little familiarity with our terminology and vocabulary.

Because teachers play such an important role in the conversation with the next generation, those who are new to our story need to be equipped to meet their responsibility of passing on core values to the next generation. They need to understand clearly the community they've bought into, and they need words and understanding to tell the story and articulate answers to their most basic questions: What is the meaning of this education? What is its purpose? Why do we find this kind of education so compelling?

Mennonite Schools Council recently created Anabaptist Learning Institute to orient teachers to Mennonite-Anabaptist values and beliefs and better equip them to pass on core values. Can you tell us more about the institute?

The institute offers 10 graduate semester hours leading to a professional development certificate for teachers employed by affiliates of MSC and is co-sponsored by Mennonite Education Agency. Eastern Mennonite University was invited to provide assistance in launching the program in conjunction with our master's of education program. The other Mennonite Church USA higher education institutions have been involved and informed of the initiatives, and we expect broad participation from their programs in the future.

The institute will offer four courses. Learning the Language of Community, offered last fall, provided an overview of key concepts of Mennonite-Anabaptist community and included an introduction to people, organizations and the vision of the church.

Three additional classes are scheduled for 2006-07: Core Values of the Anabaptist Christian Community, a study of service, conflict transformation, respect, simplicity and social justice; Theology and History of the Mennonite Anabaptist Community, and Education for Shaping a Community of Learners, an emphasis on pedagogical methods congruent with Mennonite faith and practice.

In what ways do you expect the institute to have an impact on the future of Mennonite-Anabaptist education?

If the first course of the institute can be taken as a preliminary measure of impact, I can attest to the fact that our educators take seriously their roles as teachers in Mennonite-Anabaptist schools. They developed thoughtful responses to questions on believer's baptism, faith as discipleship, nationalism and peace building, and interpretation of Scripture within community. They are committed to providing quality education within the context of these and other core values.

Teachers will continue to make the difference as they retell the story and invite students to join in the conversation. The institute is equipped to

Mennonite education refuses to separate mind and spirit and instead follows a Hebraic philosophy of educating for life rather than only for performance.
—Donovan Steiner

provide educators with new ways of thinking and new resources to equip them for their task. For example, the 65 teachers who signed up for the first class received pedagogical resources from J. Daryl Byler, director of the Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office. They also considered more carefully the integration of Mennonite thought and education during a lecture by Mark Thiessen Nation, professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. Educators also caught a vision for using technology to connect students in U.S. classrooms to students in classrooms in Peru, Vietnam and Iran and underscoring core values.

As the institute continues to provide intentional professional training that meet practical needs, I am convinced that teachers in Mennonite schools will be equipped to carry out more effectively the mission of the church.

Gloria Y. Diener is a member of Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va. She wrote this article for Mennonite Education Agency.

Donovan Steiner, director of the master's of education program at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., considers the meaning of Mennonite-Anabaptist education in Mennonite Church USA preK-12 schools and describes the purpose and vision for the newly formed Anabaptist Learning Institute. ALI is a program of Mennonite Schools Council and is co-sponsored by Mennonite Education Agency. Representatives from the council and from Mennonite Church USA higher education institutions have collaborated to develop a set of graduate courses for teachers and administrators that will provide essential background and training for working within the mission and purpose of the schools. Don, who has provided leadership for the development of ALI, also serves on the board of directors of Eastern Mennonite School in Harrisonburg and is chair of the Education Department at EMU.

Because teachers play such an important role in the conversation with the next generation, those who are new to our story need to be equipped to meet their responsibility of passing on core values to the next generation.

God's call for Mennonite ed

Dreams for the next decades

by Carlos Romero

I dream that we will come to understand our school campuses as centers of discerning God's will.

What is God calling Mennonite Church USA to become? This question will always be relevant, not only for our denomination but for its preschools, elementary and secondary schools, colleges, universities and seminaries.

Each school has a different culture, history, understanding of how we do church, ways of relating to each other, polities and definitions of terms such as ownership, accountability, governance and control.

This represents an opportunity to learn from each other, to bring together the best each has, to become more effective in our missional efforts. Part of God's call is to bring the wealth of our past to the table so that together we may continue being part of God's story and create new cultures and new definitions.

At a School for Leadership Training at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., Patrick Keaffert, president of Church Innovations in Minneapolis, described the process this way: "To become a transformed church we must begin by dwelling in the study of Scripture and doing so with people you don't normally do it with, to gain fresh perspective.

"Transformation is being, not doing. It is tending to the movement of God and going with the flow. It doesn't happen overnight, but one senses it is happening when there is a sense of increased vitality in the congregation and the emphasis shifts from program to ministry, to an alignment with God's purpose for the church."

MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EAR

Courtesy Mennonite Education Agency

Gathered around the Freeman (S. D.) Academy peace pole, students and faculty pray for peace during a fall 2004 chapel service.

I want to be bold, to invite all of us to dream of what might become reality a decade from now or beyond, as we combine the strength of our past and present in order to build a stronger church and share its unique mission with our world.

I dream of a time when we move beyond the differences of history and create something new, an identity of who we are in the context of the church, our missional calling and faithfulness. What brought us together as a new denomination is not differences but our common mission and shared desire to answer Christ's call.

I dream that we will understand our roles as schools. One of those roles is to equip people to be fully engaged in God's mission, to strengthen the church through education and share the Good News as we understand it as Anabaptists.

I dream that the percentage of Mennonite students attending our schools at all levels grows; that we will be able to turn around the pattern of the last several years by combining our thought, energy and efforts. Mennonite education not only helps to build our congregations but helps shape our world through the impact of students, both within and beyond the church.

I dream that the number of non-Mennonite students attending our schools grows. Mennonites have something to share with the world. The Anabaptist lens of viewing the world through an understanding of community and a commitment to peace and

ucation

Courtesy Mennonite Education Agency

First- and fifth-grade book box buddies at Penn View Christian School, Souderton, Pa., enjoy reading together. From left are Stephanie Miller, Sharon Curtis and Katelyn Kratz.

justice and our way of sharing the gospel calls us to discipleship; it is part of our faithfulness. We have something important to say. Many of us know the stories of people who have been touched in such a way through our educational system. Even if they have not become Mennonites (though some have), their lives will never be the same.

From my personal history and with self-interest as a parent, I hope and dream for Mennonite education to do for others, including my children, what it did for me. It shaped my worldview, gave me a new understanding of what it means to be part of a community and a commitment to peace and justice. Most important, it was a place where I found God in my life and new understandings of God's call to me.

I dream that we understand our schools as missional centers for God's work in this world in partnership with congregations, area conferences and other Mennonite institutions. I dream that we will work hard to discern what God is calling us to and do it, realizing it may not be what we expected.

I dream that we will get to the point where we encourage students in our colleges, universities and seminaries to experience at least one semester in another Mennonite school.

I dream that this type of interchange will be available for teachers in all levels of education—preschool, elementary, secondary and higher education—so that they can move throughout the system in exchanges that help us understand each other better.

I dream that in the next decade we will begin a churchwide endowment fund for the training of future Mennonite teachers for all levels of education, with a particular emphasis on training teachers with racial/ethnic backgrounds.

I dream of a second endowment fund to help students attend a Mennonite school, supplementing financial assistance already available. I dream we will reach the point where every Mennonite young person who wants to attend a Mennonite school will be able to do so. This is an investment in the future of the church.

I dream that we will come to understand our school campuses as centers of discerning God's will, where not only teachers, staff and students do so in day-to-day interaction but other parts of the church also have this opportunity.

I dream that in the next decade our new collaborative efforts will enable us to respond in effective and efficient ways to the educational needs of the whole church, particularly racial/ethnic people and urban dwellers.

I see this as a new day and a holy time. Together, church educators are attempting to answer the question, What is God calling Mennonite Church USA educational institutions to become?

Carlos Romero is executive director of Mennonite Education Agency. This article is based on a presentation he made to Mennonite Education Agency's Education Leaders Gathering in Pittsburgh in February 2005.

What brought us together as a new denomination is not differences but our common mission and shared desire to answer Christ's call.

Making Jesus ce
Men

A proposal for church-based schooling

by Gerald Biesecker-Mast

Mennonite churches and schools have been shaped by many of the same cultural forces described in a recent book edited by Catholic educator Michael Budde and evangelical educator John Wright, *Conflicting Allegiances: The Church-Based University in a Liberal-Democratic Society*. This book argues that Catholic and Protestant churches and their educational institutions have largely accepted the terms of the social contract that governs modern democratic states with market economies.

Mennonites should know better and do better at making the life of the church central to the life of our schools.

This contract asks religious communities to produce obedient, cooperative citizen workers for the state and its commercial sponsors while granting in "private" life the rights of personal and religious liberty. Church-related institutions operating within this political horizon seek to build the character of individual students by stressing "values" that contribute to the well-being of society as a whole. But such a "values-based" approach separates Christian conviction from the life of the church and ultimately serves the nation rather than the church—often leading young people out of the church, even as they become successful entrepreneurs and managers.

As inheritors of the Anabaptist vision, Mennonites should know better and do better at making the life of the church central to the life of our schools. In the coming years, the mutual health of the church and its schools will rely on a shared vision for making God's reconciling work in Israel, Jesus Christ and the church the primary horizon for all our endeavors. This vision shifts the focus from questions of formal church-school relationship to questions of purpose and identity.

My proposal for strengthening church-based education at Mennonite schools includes five areas for growth and development. These arise from strengths and resources that are already available on our campuses but sometimes taken for granted or neglected as our schools struggle to thrive in the 21st-century educational marketplace.

1. Mennonite church-based education provides students with competence in understanding and telling the story of Israel, Jesus and the church. In his essay "Learning Made Strange," from the book *God, Truth, and Witness*, Canadian Mennonite theologian Harry Huebner, academic dean at Canadian Mennonite University, writes, "The request of the church is for the Christian university to participate in shaping a people who are literate and fluent in a language that is able to disclose what God is doing in this world." Surely Bible and religion departments will take the lead in providing such biblical and theological competence, but the task of relating this saving story to the whole of life is the task of the entire curriculum and thus of every faculty member.

Increasingly, church-based schools will provide theological and biblical training for educators who seek to subject their own academic disciplines to the discipline of Christ and the church. Making sure students have adequate opportunities for intensive study of the Bible, theology and church history will be an increasing priority.

2. Mennonite church-based education provides students with global understanding and awareness rooted in the global identity of the church of Jesus Christ. Cross-cultural education programs have flourished in Mennonite higher education and made a difference in the lives of many students. Rooting such cross-cultural experiences in the practices of the church and providing theological language for understanding cross-cultural conflict and communication will strengthen the role of the church in the educational experience of students and provide a more truthful account of social and cultural difference.

Cross-cultural experiences should not be seen only as occasions for strengthening career skills in the global marketplace but as practices that help the church in the reconciling work it is called to.

3. Mennonite church-based education prepares students to be agents of God's reconciling love who preach, teach and make peace in every context of their lives. Peace and conflict studies programs are common on our campuses, and Mennonite contributions to the conflict transformation field have been significant. Such programs must extend their understandings of peacemaking across the liberal arts curriculum and relate their peace-building training to the church. Social science disciplines provide useful paradigms for understanding recon-

ntral in nonite education

ciliation and conflict transformation. But in a church-based school these paradigms must be deployed against the great drama of God's salvation project. The goal should be discussion across the liberal arts and professional studies curriculum of how the peacemaking witness of the church shapes our perspective on every academic discipline and every professional context.

4. Mennonite church-based educational institutions can best accomplish their church-based missions by sharing with one another the gifts they have received from the Lord of the church. Each institution has resources to contribute to the countercultural project of educating students in the peaceable reign of Jesus Christ. Typically these resources receive little funding or recognition. But if all Mennonite colleges and universities work together to craft a biblically grounded study-service term program for all students at Mennonite schools, including the histories and resources of each institution, a life-transforming experience for the majority of our students could follow.

This is only one example of how cooperation could strengthen the churchly identity of our schools. Others include new cooperative ventures in enrollment management, curriculum coordination, faculty and student exchanges, and social and political witness. In today's competitive climate, such ventures will be dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit, the wisdom of the cross and the counsel of the church.

5. Mennonite church-based educational institutions must give and receive counsel from the church on which they are based. Because Mennonite church-school relationships have often been stormy, shaped by mutual suspicion and fear and thus the source of pain and anger, it is difficult to imagine a functional model for the exchange of wisdom and insight between church and school. Yet when both the church and its schools are under enormous pressure to conform to the unfaithful ways of the surrounding society, such mutual counsel is essential for the survival of a called-out people of God who have discovered the freedom of Christ invading every area of their lives. A central task of Mennonite Education Agency will be to provide decent, orderly forums for exchanges of concern, hope and analysis that can replace such destructive tactics as letter-writing campaigns, pamphleteering and personal attacks. One example of such an orderly and mutually beneficial process was the evaluative visit by members of the General Conference Mennonite Church's Higher Education Council to Bethel and Bluffton in the early 1990s. The opportunities for discussion of the problems and possibilities of Mennonite colleges and universities at recent Mennonite Church USA assemblies also offer some promise, though these forums would be strengthened by follow-up conversations on the school campuses, where the concerns and hopes expressed during the assembly forums are considered by faculty and staff. Colleges and universities have much to contribute to the church beyond educating its students. The research and publication of faculty members, especially as it appears in such Mennonite academic journals as *Mennonite Quarterly Review, Conrad Grebel Review, Mission Focus* and *Vision*, can contribute to the vitality and integrity of church life, provided church leaders read and discuss this work.

Each institution has resources to contribute to the countercultural project of educating students in the peaceable reign of Jesus Christ.

There is much to celebrate about the distinctive Christian witness offered by Mennonite church schools. When my university's education department sought accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, a member of the accreditation team that visited our campus was so moved by the vision for Christian reconciliation and peacemaking that she discovered throughout our institutional life that after the visit she sought more information on the Mennonite church and its witness. This reminds us that the call to base our education in the reconciling work of God through Jesus and the church is not a new thing for our schools. It is a call to which we must continue to respond if Mennonite education is to have a meaningful future.

Gerald Biesecker-Mast is associate professor of communication at Bluffton (Ohio) University.

together
sharing all of
Christ
with all of creation

PART 3 OF AN EIGHT-PART SERIES

Roots of Swedish youth ministry trail back decades

by Ryan Miller

In the front of Anna-Lena Andersson's Bible—a childhood gift from her grandmother—is space for her family tree. Perhaps more appropriate for the pages of that good book would be a record of Andersson's faith genealogy. The trunk of that tree—the base from which the branches grow—is Grottan, the youth café ministry of the Salem free church that offers a safe place for teens in Jokkmokk, Sweden, to gather and a ministry she now leads.

In 1977, newlywed Tom and Disa Rutschman moved to Jokkmokk, where Disa had been hired as a grade school teacher. Within a week, they joined a group of believers and seekers that had started an ecumenical Bible study. Märith and Lars-Ture Lindholm were part of that group.

Märith was a Christian. Lars-Ture was not, but he wanted the peace that he saw in his wife. Lars-Ture had been baptized a Lutheran as an infant. He and Märith were leading a youth group for the state church in Jokkmokk, but he had no faith.

In Sweden, as in many European countries, most infants are baptized into the state church—often Lutheran, Catholic or Anglican. Baptism, however, does not translate into belief. Most Swedes, while officially part of the Lutheran state church, only see sanctuary interiors for weddings, funerals, baptisms and confirmations.

Lars-Ture wanted more.

After the Rutschmans arrived, the small group examined the book of Romans and read about adult baptism. Tom Rutschman said Lars-Ture often pushed the group, asking questions of faith and debating their answers. One day, Lars-Ture tried to convince another skeptic of the truth found in Christ.

"I found myself defending Jesus. I realized I was a believer," Lars-Ture says.

The Lindholms chose to be baptized again, this time by the Salem free church. When the state church found out, they kindly suggested the couple find a new place to worship.

"I didn't know what to do and how to act. I had no history. [The Rutschmans] were really needed when they came," Lars-Ture says. "Tom is my teacher. ... Disa spreads light from Jesus Christ just by being there."

Tom says the group felt strongly that Salem needed to offer youth the chance to discover Christ. Salem members had been renting the church's basement as storage space. Lars-Ture had a better idea: Grottan.

Swedish for "the cave," Grottan began in 1978 as a youth café open two nights a week. It began without the Rutschmans, who left to serve four years in Spain with Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network. Lars-Ture says the church initially resisted the ministry.

"There were young kids that were drunk. We had a lot of fights," Lars-Ture says. "[Salem members] were terrified. What was going on in their beautiful church? I'm not blaming them, but I told them God would have to stop me. ... I didn't do anything but love [the youth]."

After a time, the youth began to love Lars-Ture and Märith back. Teens policed themselves, keeping out the drunks, breaking up fights and preventing thefts. Grottan became a place to hang out without trouble.

The Lindholms did not hide their faith inside Grottan. They printed Bible verses on the walls and offered times for prayer, but neither did they force Grottan visitors to worship. When faith questions arose, they answered them.

Anna-Lena and her friends asked questions out

Ryan Miller

The trunk of the tree: From left, Tom Rutschman, Reaching and Discipling member John Snyder, Anna-Lena Andersson, RAD member Gina Marner and Miriam Rutschman plan a 24-hour vigil to pray for the future of Grottan, a Friday night teen club in the free church at Jokkmokk, Sweden.

of fun, gently mocking Lars-Ture for his beliefs. Soon, she says, her tone shifted. She and some friends began staying hours past Grottan's 11 p.m. closing time just to talk to Lars-Ture about God.

Anna-Lena cannot recall meeting a Christian before she first drove her moped to Grottan. Despite her grandmother's gift of a Bible, her family never spoke of faith. She wanted to know more.

As Lars-Ture remembers, "She came in, sat down on a sofa and asked for a Bible. Then she just sat there and read."

She devoured the New Testament in a month. She read, listened to cassettes and prayed. Finally, during a Grottan campout, she gave her life to Christ. Soon after, she attended Salem free church.

"Lars and Märith became my spiritual parents and have been so until today. I still seek their advice," Anna-Lena says.

The Lindholms sought advice elsewhere. Grottan was growing, and they felt their biblical knowledge was too sparse to help the young believers become disciples. The Salem leadership contacted the Rutschmans in Barcelona and asked them to return to Jokkmokk as mission workers. Since 1983, Tom and Disa have worked alongside Salem church leaders and with youth at Grottan and in the public schools.

"Life has more to offer [the teens] than getting drunk on the weekend," Tom says. "Something should be done to at least give the young people a chance at discovering faith."

Anna-Lena's discoveries continued. Thanks to encouragement from the Rutschmans and other leaders, she became an elder, preached at a time when some thought women should not stand behind a pulpit and eventually sought more formal theological training.

Today others call her the leader of Grottan, a title she rejects.

"My goals are to be there for the kids and, if possible, become a hand reached out from God to them," she says.

If Anna-Lena's faith roots reach to that 1970s Bible study, she says others have helped nurture Salem's growth from the aging congregation that first greeted the Rutschmans and Lindholms.

"The elderly people of the church prayed and prayed for years, preparing the ground for what was to come," Anna-Lena says. Nearly a dozen members of a thriving youth group now assist with the Grottan ministry, allowing Anna-Lena to spend most of her time with the unchurched youth.

Recently Anna-Lena wrote an email after a night more than 40 visitors spent at Grottan. "Last night a guy that visited Grottan for the first time commented on the Bible verses painted on the walls, just as I did some 23 years ago."

She trailed off. If this young man returns next week, or perhaps the week after, he may notice more about Grottan and the lives of the youth and adults behind it. And perhaps a new branch will grow.

Ryan Miller is news director for Mennonite Mission Network.

Young adults also minister to youth

When Jokkmokk youth find their way to Grottan through the winter chill, they find a group of North Americans ready to greet them. Last November, four young adults became the fifth RAD (Reaching and Discipling) team to serve in Sweden.

Tom Rutschman says the youth teams are crucial to the Grottan ministry. Team members help teach English in the local schools, interacting with the same students Grottan hopes to attract.

Lars-Goran Hannler, whose children spent time at Grottan, says RAD team members are "good examples" that draw local youth to the café and impress them with energy and attitude. Some local students spend afternoons and evenings at the RAD house. Rebecca Shumaker, a RAD team member in 2004-2005 and now on staff at Great Lakes Discipleship Center, says one evening was different.

"We invited them to stay and eat supper with us. One of the boys brought up God," she wrote in a prayer letter. They asked questions and discussed ideas. They had been thinking about God and needed to hear more from the RAD point of view.

Jim Yngvesson, now in ninth grade, is a regular at the RAD house because they have welcomed him. "If everybody was like them," Jim says, "it would be a very nice world."—*Ryan Miller and Ann Graham Price*

Faithfulness and grace

Carlos Romero is executive director of Mennonite Education Agency.

Technological advances and demographic shifts are changing our world in ways we can only imagine.

Mennonite Church USA demographics are changing, too. Membership of racial/ethnic congregations is growing at a rapid pace. If you find yourself in Los Angeles on a Sunday morning, you can worship in any of more than 10 languages in Mennonite Church USA congregations. Franconia Mennonite Conference works with 17 different languages in its Philadelphia churches alone. There will be tremendous changes in how we do church if we choose to embrace this diversity.

What does this mean for our schools?

Right now, Mennonite Education Agency, Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church USA Intercultural Relations are cooperating in an urban and racial/ethnic education initiative. The goal is to explore the educational needs of Mennonites living in urban areas and of racial/ethnic people and develop proposals to address those needs. The first of the initiative's two events, called Equipping for Urban Ministry, was held in November 2005 in Indianapolis. The second, the Education Opportunities Summit, is to be held Feb. 20-22 in Los Angeles.

To talk about racial/ethnic issues is hard, uncomfortable work. Many times in the church we enter the conversation from the perspective of social justice. Racism is a social justice issue, but I believe we are called to move beyond that. Being antiracist is simply being faithful, being the kind of people God has called us to be.

To say that our educational institutions do not care about this issue is to negate the good intentions and efforts of the past and present. Schools have invested time, money, thought and prayer to understand and meet needs. On the other hand, to consider our efforts enough is to negate the experiences and frustrations of racial/ethnic and urban Mennonites. There has been much progress, and there are miles to go.

The schools of Mennonite Church USA—preK-12, college/university and seminary—and Mennonite Education Agency are intent on heeding God's call to embrace the diversity God created. It is also a reality that our institutions must work efficiently and effectively to sustain their missions. They cannot meet every need, but to be able to articulate this reflects an open and honest relationship that can only strengthen us.

When our conversation is Christ-centered, we can bring about both better self-understanding and trusting relationships.

Mennonite Church USA and its schools are diverse communities, unified in Christ. When our conversation is Christ-centered, we can bring about both better self-understanding and trusting relationships. After all, "There is no other foundation … than … Jesus Christ."

I believe in God's goodness and the power of Christ in our relationships. This for me is a key to this issue—the grace component in relationships that enables us to have deeper intercultural understandings and to be the church God envisions.

With God's grace, we can move from misunderstanding and pain to a new depth of loving relationship. After all, we are all God's children. This is my prayer for Mennonite Church USA and its schools.

This Scripture passage offers a glimpse of the future: "I saw a huge crowd, too huge to count. Everyone was there—all nations and tribes, all races and languages. And they were standing, dressed in white robes and waving palm branches, standing before the Throne and the Lamb and heartily singing: Salvation to our God on his Throne! Salvation to the Lamb.

"Oh, Yes!
The blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving,
The honor and power and strength,
To our God forever and ever and ever!
Oh, Yes!"
(Revelation 7:9-12, *The Message*). TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **A gardener of kindness**—Emily S. Will
- **Mennonite mystery writer**—Cathleen Hockman-Wert
- **Maximizing the gift of strength**—Roy E. Bronkema

Central Christian School

Mennonite schools' enrollment increases

Second-grade girls dressed in 1790's garb during a special activity last October at Central Christian Learning Center in Kidron, Ohio. From left: Jenessa Woodrich, Shelby Cooperider and Cammie Amstutz.

Enrollment in Mennonite Church USA schools totals 15,162 during the current school year. That is an increase of 227—or 1.5 percent—over the total number of students enrolled during the previous year (see box).

More than two-thirds of all students in Mennonite schools are enrolled in elementary, middle and high schools. Mennonite Education Agency provides the numbers (see box) as "head-counts" rather than as full-time equivalencies.

Part-time enrollment in graduate programs showed the largest increase, but that increase was because "the EMU graduate education program attracted more students taking a single course in varied locations," says MEA's associate director Cheryl Zehr Walker.

Seminary enrollment declined from 323 in the 2004-2005 school year to 317 this year. Undergraduate enrollment in Mennonite Church USA colleges remained nearly the same, with the total decreasing by one student.

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., remains the largest Mennonite Church USA university, although Bluffton (Ohio) University has the largest undergraduate enrollment. EMU's total enrollment of 1,576 includes graduate students as well as the enrollment in Eastern Mennonite Seminary.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Mennonite Church USA schools' enrollment

		AMBS	Bethel	Bluffton	EMU	Goshen	Hesston	2005-06 total	2004-05 total	Percent change
Undergraduates	Full-time		476	900	867	788	414	3,445	3,443	0.1
	Part-time		38	67	30	87	59	281	282	-0.4
Degree-completion				114	132	46		292	325	-10.2
Graduates	Full-time			67	68			135	135	0.0
	Part-time			21	346			367	189	94.2
Seminary	Full-time	64			63			127	140	-9.3
	Part-time	120			70			190	183	3.8
Higher education total enrollment		184	514	1,169	1,576	921	473	4,837	4,697	3.0
Mennonite Elementary/Secondary Education Council student enrollment total								10,325	10,238	0.8
All students enrolled grand total								15,162	14,935	1.5

Source: Mennonite Education Agency

Leaders confront urban education needs

Also want 'personal urban context' for rural students in colleges, seminaries

Ryan Miller

From left: Andy Johnston, pastor of Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship and Mennonite Mission Network urban ministry director; Hugo Saucedo, San Antonio DOOR director and Western District Conference youth minister; Leroy Barber, vice president of Mission Year

Many urbanites feel isolated from Mennonite education due to location, culture and finances. Higher education leaders struggle to know how urban resources or relationships can be used. The challenge for the leaders is to help the two groups find a place to overlap.

That overlap, they say, is not only important for Anabaptist urban growth but for the long-term health of Mennonite education.

Nearly 60 congregational, denominational and educational leaders participated in the annual Urban Leaders Network meeting organized by Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Church USA Intercultural Relations last October.

They gathered to talk about needs among urban congregations and underrepresented groups and to develop objectives toward meeting those needs. A preliminary list of those needs and objectives will be the basis for a second round of discussions in a follow-up summit Feb. 19-21 in Los Angeles. The list of needs and objectives includes

- Help prepare city-dwellers to be more fully a part of Mennonite Church USA life.
- Provide hands-on tools that prepare urban leaders to work in neighborhoods resolving conflict and promoting peace.
- Reshape educational boards to include more urban representatives and create advisory boards to give professors more contact with nonacademics.
- Encourage young adults to reconnect with congregations after college graduation.
- Find ways to help schools teach individuals and congregations practical skills through short-term workshops on-site or tools such as the Internet and videoconferencing.
- Build alliances with non-Mennonite organizations or institutions in cities and college campuses or create new groups to support Mennonites in traditionally non-Mennonite locations.
- Recognize existing programs in urban congregations that support, promote and fund education at all levels and offer those programs as models for other congregations.

Leaders lauded the conceptual educations that rural students receive at Mennonite schools but challenged colleges and universities to provide a personal urban context for their students. Programs like Ministry Internship Program, Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education, DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection) and Mennonite Central Committee internships were listed as partners that could offer urban experience to go with educational or theological training.

Jorge Vallejos, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA, says reinforcing Anabaptist ideals among urbanites should be the church's priority ahead of educating rural whites about urban issues.

B. Elaine Bryant, pastor of Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago, says reinforcement cannot end with the theological. Mennonite institutions could team with other schools to provide technical or trade training with the theology so that urban church leaders can make a living while preaching the gospel.

Even with apprenticeship offerings or technical training, several contributors say barriers remain to prevent many urban students from examining Mennonite schools. Some find a cultural barrier between an urban or ethnic upbringing and the more rural settings and attitudes at Mennonite institutions.

Others simply cannot afford to leave the cities. Furthermore, alternatives beckon—including the military's promises of job-training and scholarship money.

While some congregations are offering scholarship programs or other financial aid for good grades or to attend Mennonite colleges, many urban scholars find sturdy barriers blocking their educational paths.

Kenyetta Aduma Twine, director of Mennonite Church USA's Intercultural Relations office, said congregations must have help.

"It is important that we don't just put the onus on urban congregations. The onus is shared," she says. "We are all part of the body and we need each other to function as Christ intended."—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

Early childhood education is new focus

Network formed at Charlotte 2005 convention wants congregational contacts.

J. David Yoder

Left to right: Linda K. Huber, Muncie, Ind.; Linda Martin, Harleysville, Pa.; and Kathryn Aschliman, Goshen, Ind., lead a discussion at the Mennonite Early Childhood Network meeting at the Charlotte 2005 convention.

Established at Charlotte 2005, the Mennonite Early Childhood Network is looking to grow its base among Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada congregations.

Mennonite Early Childhood Network is supported by Mennonite Education Agency. Its goal is to establish networking between Mennonite educators who work with kindergarten and pre-kindergarten children in a variety of settings.

The network was founded through the efforts of a planning committee led by Kathryn Aschliman of Goshen, Ind. MEA will provide a database of existing services and include parents, early childhood educators and training institutions.

Impetus for the network came from funds Goshen (Ind.) College received from the estate of Evelyn Rouner designated for early childhood education. Rouner's interest in early childhood education at Goshen began when she served on the doctoral committee for Aschliman, professor emerita of early childhood education.

Early childhood education needs are being met by congregations with through-the-week kindergarten and pre-kindergarten learning programs, such as Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) and Mothers'/Parents' Day Out.

Nursery school or preschool, childcare, co-ops, Head Start and kindergarten classes are other examples of programs created and used by local congregations to benefit young children, ranging from infants to kindergarten-age.

Congregations with early childhood programs and Mennonite child-care providers and early childhood educators are encouraged to forward their contact information using the form available at www.MennoniteEducation.org/EARLY or by contacting Aschliman at kathrynaa@goshen.edu or 574-533-7458.

Mennonite Education Agency, the churchwide education agency of Mennonite Church USA, is the first to include early childhood in its mandate. One of the agency's goals is to provide a seamless education experience to strengthen the life, witness and identity of the denomination by facilitating education initiatives that meet the diverse needs of its people.—*Marathana Prothro for Mennonite Church USA News Service. Kathryn Aschliman contributed to this report.*

Education agency balances its budget

But contributions to Racial Ethnic Leadership Fund decline to $97,239.

Audited information released by Mennonite Education Agency on Jan. 5 indicates that MEA averted financial trouble during its fiscal year that ended June 30, 2005 (see "Mennonite Education Agency Faces Deficit," May 17, 2005).

The turnaround was made possible by contributions of $62,383 from individuals, a 52 percent increase over the previous year. However, contributions from area conferences and congregations totaled only $241,932, an 18 percent decrease from the previous year.

MEA's expenses for the fiscal year were $796,735, while its revenue totaled $833,516. In addition to contributions from individuals, congregations and area conferences, MEA received $529,199 from bequests, consulting and management fees, investment income and support from Mennonite schools. MEA concluded its fiscal year with a $48,673 increase in net assets.

The Racial Ethnic Leadership Education (RELE) fund is a separate budget managed by Mennonite Education Agency. That fund continued its decline with contributions of $97,239. This represents a significant decrease from the $136,927 contributed to the fund by individuals, congregations and area conferences for the year ending June 30, 2003.

The RELE fund also received $9,123 from benefit events, investments and loan repayment revenue. Total RELE fund revenue for the year was $106,362 while total expenses were $94,470.
—*Everett J. Thomas*

Third Way Café Web site continues to answer questions about Mennonites

When it comes to communicating its theology outside the denomination, David A. Shank believes the Mennonite Church has some work to do. Shank, a retired mission worker in Belgium and Africa, answers the heavier theological emails sent to Third Way Café and Mennonite Church USA Web sites, often bouncing ideas and responses off his wife, Wilma.

One such question came from Laura, who challenged the Mennonite church to "rethink its stance on the war on terror, and ask God to lead you. I am a born-again Christian and know you should understand the importance of supporting Israel. ... How do you reconcile the Old Testament, where God had Israel go in, take the land he gave them and kill all the idol worshippers of other faiths?"

Shank launched into four or five rounds of emails with Laura, challenging whether she really thought Christians were to kill worshippers of other faiths, trying to avoid "verse by verse" wars and explaining the difference between the "old" covenant (testament) and the "new." Shank ended being disappointed by the exchange. He felt the Mennonite positions were not really understood, which is often the case when giving witness to Jesus' way of peace.

I am so desperate to know what to do to please God, but I have no idea anymore. I feel so worthless and like such a disappointment.
—Don

In another recent round of correspondence, a man named Don requested a forum for ongoing dialogue with a Mennonite pastor or respondent to reflect on a statement about Jesus on Third Way Café (under "Glimpses of Jesus") that says, "New-Age thinking often brings people to a very ancient heresy, the heresy of syncretism, where one truth is equally as good and as valid as any other truth."

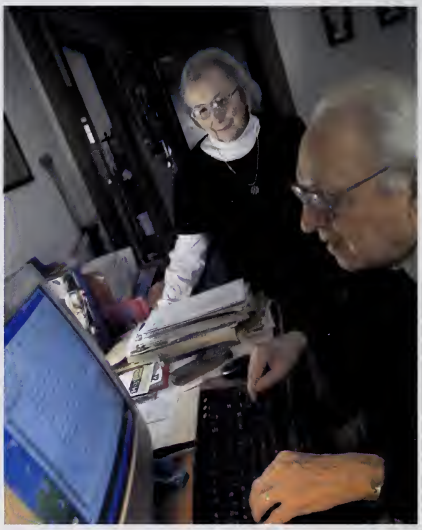
"Why is it so hard to figure out the truth?" Don asked. "How can I know for sure who Jesus was—prophet, Lord, God or just a man?"

Don said he had tried many Protestant faiths—Catholicism, Islam, Taoism—but still felt empty. How, he asked, can he know what is truth over everything else?

"I am so desperate to know what to do to please God, but I have no idea anymore," he wrote. "I feel so worthless and like such a disappointment."

After corresponding awhile, Don indicated to David that he would "try the Christian way." David wrote back, "That's very good news," and strongly encouraged him to find Christian friends and a congregation for support.

Several weeks later, Don said he found his dialogue with David to be helpful, knowledgeable and compassionate. The conversation helped him think about faith, even though he remains undecided on Christianity and Islam.



Ryan Miller

Wilma and David Shank of Goshen, Ind., answer many of the more difficult theological questions sent to Third Way Café.

"I wish I could give you more of a glowing report of a spiritual turnaround," Don wrote, "but it just is not there."

Not every conversation ends with conversion. The important thing, according to site creators, is that the conversations begin. During the first 10 months of 2005, 319 people sent questions dealing with everything from gun ownership to coverings, from drinking habits to governance (see box on page 23). This figure already surpassed yearlong totals for 2003 and 2004.

In the seven years since Third Way Café was launched in 1998, Mennonite Media, a department of Mennonite Mission Network and producers of Third Way Café, has averaged close to 500 emails, phone and letter inquiries a year requiring a personal—sometimes theological—response. Questions sent to the Mennonite Church USA Web site also are answered by Third Way Café respondents. Jodi Nisley Hertzler responds to most of the questions from her home computer.

"People appreciate the anonymity of sending a question to a Web site. They don't need to be embarrassed to ask what one recently called 'blundering' questions," says Sheri Hartzler, leader of the team that produces and oversees the Web site.

The number of questions peaked in 1999, with 747 individual inquiries, but in 2002 Third Way Café posted a glossary of more than 100 items

"The fate of humanity is in your hands," says David as he asks for information about Mennonite history, culture and religion "in paragraph form."

arising out of the most routine questions, such as differences between Amish and Mennonite and confusion over Mennonite and Amish dress, technology, buggies and social customs. The new glossary caused an immediate reduction in the number of emails needing a personal answer.

But the number of inquiries has climbed every year since then, resulting in deeper questions, especially around peace issues that reflect serious thought and inquiry on the part of Web users.

Frequently inquirers also respond to items in the news. When Pope John Paul II died, some writers wanted to know about differences between Mennonites and Catholics. When Terry Schiavo died in early 2005, "Morgan" asked for Mennonite perspectives. Hertzler referred Morgan to Joseph J. Kotva's writings and statements in Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, which is used by Third Way Café as the basis for responding to theological questions.

After Jeff and Carolyn Schrock's five children were killed in a Washington car accident last November, several people emailed Third Way Café, asking that their sympathies be sent to the Schrocks.

"We couldn't figure out why they were coming to us to pass on sympathies," Sheri Hartzler says. One reader reported that they had found Third Way Café (and apparently information about Mennonites) through a link in an article in a Washington newspaper about the tragedy.

Overall, most correspondence with Third Way Café inquirers continues for only one or two exchanges, but many express appreciation.

Cindy wrote, "You have no idea how warmhearted it made me feel to get a personal reply to my letter. I have checked out your church locations in my area, Salem, Ore., and have found three locations. I am seriously considering going—especially now. Your answers were informative without being condemning or pushy … the reason I will pursue further this look at the Mennonite faith.

"God is working through you," she continued. "Thank you for answering his call."—*Melodie Davis of Mennonite Mission Network*

Top 10 unusual questions sent to Third Way Café in 2005

1. What fasteners are allowed on Mennonite women's clothing?—Janice

2. Someone told me that the Mennonites make very nice gazebos. We are looking for one and wondered if you could point me in the right direction. —Tammy

3. Are marriages arranged?—Sheena

4. Forgive me this blundering question, but how do Mennonite folks feel about Christmas presents? I'd like to give someone a gift. Thanks and sorry if this question is too dense. I'm afraid I've always been a bit thick.—Robert

5. What is your view of the Catholic doctrine of the Pope as infallible vicar of Christ? What do you believe about the seven sacraments of the Catholic church? What is your view of the Real Presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist? How do you interpret, "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build this church?"—Alice

6. How long are the church services? (Not that it matters, just curious.) —Lisa

7. Is it true that Mennonites believe that animals have no souls? – Boyles

8. I have seen women wearing the traditional net bonnet, but I have also seen them wearing something similar to a small scarf in white or black. What is the difference?—Lisa

9. In paragraph form tell me who they are, where they came from, their culture, what they do as a group or culture, their religion. Thank you very much, please email me as soon as possible, maybe tomorrow, but please soon. The fate of humanity is in your hands.—David

10. YOU NEED MORE STUFF ON THE MENNONITE FOR GRADE 7 SCHOOL PROJECTS—Brandon [exact text and capitalization]

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Garífuna church helps Katrina evacuees

Mennonite Central Committee helps buy furniture for families in Houston.

When crowds of Hurricane Katrina evacuees arrived at the Houston Astrodome last fall, pastor Erick Suazo of Christian Church Garífuna Mercy of God came with a cardboard sign, seeking to gather those from New Orleans' Garífuna community or other Central American immigrants.

"If you are Garífuna, I'm looking for you," the sign read in Garífuna, Spanish and English. "If you are from Central America, I am looking for you."

Suazo, who moved from New York to establish a Garífuna congregation in Houston, called on members of his congregation and others in the Houston Garífuna community to help aid evacuees. In recent years, many Garífuna, who are descendants of Africans and the indigenous people of St. Vincent, a Caribbean island, have moved from Central America to the United States seeking jobs. The community maintains its own language, which combines African, indigenous and European elements, although Spanish is a common language as well.

Suazo knew some of the evacuees would be Garífuna. Eventually, with the help of his sign, he found them.

"Little by little people came to us," he says.

In the months after Hurricane Katrina, Suazo has helped connect dozens of evacuees, mostly from the Garífuna community with apartments in south Houston and needed household goods, including furniture purchased by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

It is a ministry that reaches far beyond material goods. He and his wife, Alicia, visit daily with evacuees. They hold a weekly Bible study at the apartment complex where many evacuees are living and lead youth gatherings focused on singing and drumming. They talk with evacuees and pray with them. They are available for late-night phone calls from those who still have nightmares about the hurricane or floodwater.

"We are friends," Alicia says as she sits in the apartment of evacuee Anacleta Loredo. "We are not only pastors. We are friends."

Loredo first encountered the Suazos in the Astrodome.

"When I saw the sign and saw them, it was consolation and help," says Loredo. When Loredo left New Orleans for Houston, she brought only two changes of clothes. "We were thinking it would happen for one day and the next day we would come back to New Orleans," Loredo says.

The Suazos assisted her, her daughter, 17-month-old granddaughter and two sons in securing an apartment in south Houston and arranged for them to receive MCC-funded furniture, including living room and dining room sets, beds and a crib.

It is a story shared by evacuees in dozens of apartments throughout the spread-out complex. In another apartment, Mirta Castro remembers when she saw Suazo in the Astrodome, where she had gone to search for family.

"I said, 'Wow, maybe God sent me that person,'" she says.

That impression remained as she was able to get housing, furniture and items such as food through her connection with the Suazos. After "one month in Houston, we have almost everything, thanks be to God and these people who are trying to help in the ministry of the Lord," Castro says.—*Marla Pierson Lester of Mennonite Central Committee*

> I said, 'Wow, maybe God sent me that person.' —Mirta Castro

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CALENDAR

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***Leadership and Anxiety in the Church***, April 5, Los Altos, Calif. For more information and registration brochures, contact 630-627-0507 or www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***Facilitating Healthy Congregation Pastor-Congregation Relations***, April 28-29, Denver, Colo. For more information and registration brochures, contact 630-627-0507 or www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***Mediation Skills Training Institute***, May 8-12, Minneapolis, Minn. For more information and registration brochures, contact 630-627-0507 or www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***Healthy Congregations***, May 12-13, Tulsa, Okla. For more information and registration brochures, contact 630-627-0507 or www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation***, June 13-15, Minneapolis, Minn. For more information and registration brochures, contact 630-627-0507 or www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***Mediation Skills Training Institute***, Aug. 7-11, Chicago area. For more information and registration brochures, contact 630-627-0507 or www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation***, Aug. 22-24, Chicago Area. For more information and registration brochures, contact 630-627-0507 or www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

WORKERS

Miller, Daniel Z., began Jan. 1 as interim pastor at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bender, Lucas James, Dec. 13, 2005, to Allen and Cami Nortz Bender, Lowville, N.Y.

Conklín, Jasmine Marie, received for adoption Dec. 20, 2005, by Michael and Thelma Goshnauer Conklin, Manheim, Pa.

Crane, Jada Aspen, Dec. 19, 2005, to Pistal and Rachel Janz Crane, Inola, Okla.

Dawe, Jonathan Adain, Nov. 10, 2005, to Dustin and Twila Kanagy Dawe, Chambersburg, Pa.

Franz, Kara Bethany, Dec. 30, 2005, to Kurt and Kelly Johnson Franz, Sturgis, Mich.

Fritsch, Ayden Steiner, Oct. 24, 2005, to Joe and Kathleen Steiner Fritsch, Olney, Md.

Froese, Teagen Jace, Nov. 5, 2005, to Brett Froese and Kristi Huber, Inman, Kan.

Hofer-Holdeman, Gavin Micah, Dec. 19, 2005, to Eric and Vicki Hofer-Holdeman, Wichita, Kan.

Janzen, Benjamin Thomas, Dec. 16, 2005, to Jay Dee and Wendy Allender Janzen, Hendreson, Neb.

King, Caleb Edward, Dec. 5, 2005, to Jim and Angel King, Bellefontaine, Ohio.

Klenda, Eden Elizabeth, Dec. 22, 2005, to Brian and Laurel Peters Klenda, Kimballton, Iowa.

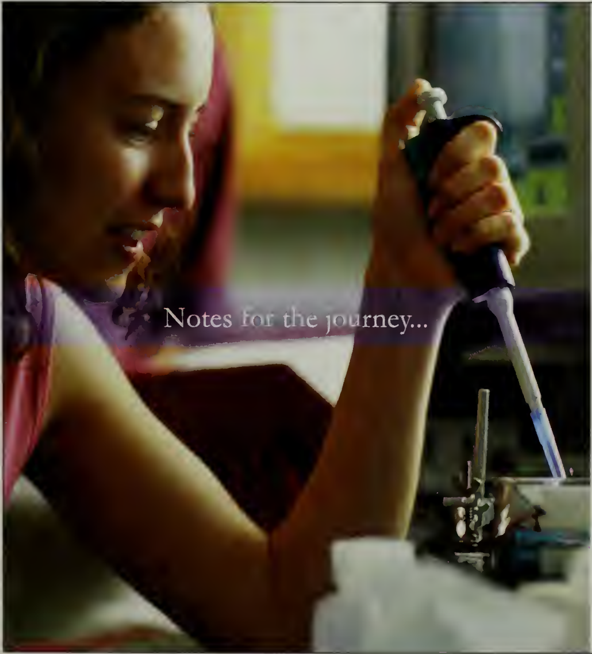
Martin, Lucan Roeder, Dec. 4, 2005, to Derek and Vicky Roeder Martin, Floradale, Ont.

Martisko, Zachary Ray, Nov. 2, 2005, to Brent Martisko and Tonya Gaeddert, Inman, Kan.

McGinnis, Javier José and Mateo Antonio (twins), received for adoption Nov. 21, 2005, by Gene and Marilyn McGinnis, Atlanta, Ga.

Roth, Meredith Ann, Dec. 12, 2005, to Cary and Nancy Reif Roth, Wayland, Iowa.

Rowe, Oliver Edward, Dec. 13, 2005, to Damian and Marla Sawatzky Rowe, Newton, Kan.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Rumsey, Adalynn Sue, Dec. 29, 2005, to Kevin and Tangela Gautsche Rumsey, Jackson, Wy.

Sawatzky, Catia Sofia, Dec. 5, 2005, to Phil and Zandra Guete Sawatzky, Newton, Kan.

Siebert, Ava Grace, Dec. 6, 2005, to Collin and Andrea Larsen Siebert, Newton, Kan.

Stuckey, Amelia Yvonne, Dec. 26, 2005, to David and Teneesa Rutter Stuckey, Goshen, Ind.

Svoboda, Ansley Kaid, Oct. 24, 2005, to Ryan and Jana Ratzlaff Svoboda, Sidney, Neb.

Unruh, Joel Bradley, Nov. 23, 2005, to Bradley Unruh and Callista Fedde, Pueblo West, Colo.

Ward, Brooke Marie, Dec. 14, 2005, to Jerry and Michelle Zehr Ward, Glenfield, N.Y.

Welles, Madelyn Dawn, Dec. 16, 2005, to Thomas and Shelby Grunder Welles, Green Lane, Pa.

Yordy, Luke Jonathan, Dec. 28, 2005, to Eric and Kristy Shellenberger Yordy, Goshen, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Block/Davis: Kara Block, Los Angeles, Calif., and Brian Davis, Los Angeles, Nov. 28, 2005, in Moneray, Calif.

Brunk/Miller: George Brunk III, Harrisonburg, Va., and Ruthann Miller, Goshen, Ind., Dec. 27, 2005, at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Hicks/King: Joseph Hicks, Lebanon, Ore., and Rebecca King, Lebanon, Nov. 5, 2005, at Lebanon Mennonite Church.

Hinton/Kramer: Kevin Hinton, Lincoln, Neb., and Annthie Kramer, Lincoln, Dec. 3, 2005, at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Janzen/Nietfeldt: Carrisa Janzen, Henderson, Neb., and Brad Nietfeldt, Grand Island, Neb., Nov. 5, 2005, at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Kliewer/Peters: Albert Kliewer, Henderson, Neb., and Jennie Friesen Peters, Henderson, Dec. 17, 2005, at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

McMinn/Unruh: John McMinn, Tulsa, Okla., and Jenny Unruh, Inman, Kan., Oct. 22, 2005, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Monzon Paz/Stoltzfus: Marco Monson Paz, San Marcos La Laguna, Guatemala, Jessi Stoltzfus, Lakewood, Colo., Dec. 3, 2005, in San Marcos La Laguna.

Moyer/Moyer: Jonathan Moyer, Harleysville, Pa., and Jenise Moyer, Souderton, Pa., Dec. 31, 2005, at Souderton Mennonite Church.

Rall/Sisson: Brian Rall and Jessica Sisson, Inman, Kan., Nov. 5, 2005.

Romans/Yost: Mary Romans, Akron, Ohio, and Jim Yost, Litchfield, Ohio, Dec. 30, 2005, at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Schmidt/Sisson: Brittania Schmidt, Inman, Kan., and Barry Sisson, Inman, Sept. 3, 2005.

DEATHS

Brenneman, Maude E. Hartzler, 97, Belleville, Pa., died Dec. 16, 2005. Spouse: Dr. J. James Brenneman (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Lydia Almeda Byler Hartzler. Children: Cecile Willet, J. James, Gwendolyn Rich, Brenda Ohnmeis; 12 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 20 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Call, Shirley Elaine, 80, Albany, Ore., died Dec. 6, 2005. Spouse: Wayne Call. Parents: Henry and Bertha Boshart Gerig. Child: Leanne Barron; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12 at Lebanon (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Claassen, Arthur, 79, Beatrice, Neb., died Oct. 28, 2005. Spouse: Elfriede Claassen. Parents: Henry and Margarete Claassen. Children: Sylvia Elia, Mark; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 2 at Beatrice Mennonite Church.

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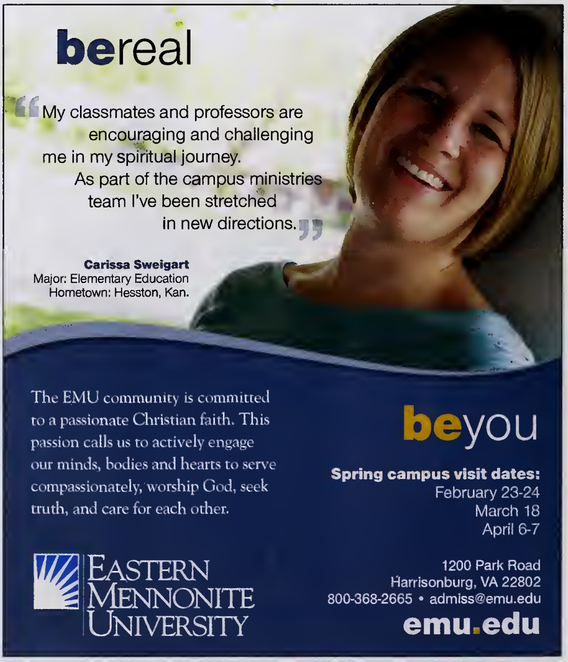

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Deputy, John Jacob, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 19, 2005. Spouse: Norma Virginia Shank Deputy. Parents: Mervin O. and Viola Heatwole Deputy. Children: Betty Holder, Lois Huffman; two grandchildren. Burial: Dec. 23 at Weavers Church Cemetery, Harrisonburg.

Dick, Franklin Thomas, 68, Henderson, Neb., died Nov. 16, 2005. Spouse: Pat Huebert Dick. Parents: Frank H. and Hazel Carnes Dick. Children: Patrice Gaines, Corey; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Enns, Waldo, 81, Inman, Kan., died Nov. 7, 2005. Parents: Henry and Agatha Enns. Children: Kathy Voth, Joan Burdette; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11 in Inman.

Frey, Marjorie Grieser, 89, Archbold, Ohio, died Dec. 11, 2005. Spouse: Glenford Frey (deceased). Parents: Edward and Aldina Grieser. Funeral: Dec. 14 in Archbold.

Hershberger, Mae Troyer, 97, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Dec. 18, 2005. Spouse: Raymond Troyer. Parents: Eli V. and Lizzie Ann Miller.. Children: Mary Hawthorne, Ada Yoder, Marvn "Red," Henry, Raymond, Charles "Chuck;" 11 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 21 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church.

Hoffman, Verle O., 85, Elkhart, Ind., died Dec. 11, 2005. Spouse: (1st) Berdine Byler (deceased), (2nd) Beverly Bingaman. Parents: Moses and Mattie Hoffman. Children: Keith, Paul, Stanley, Philip, Ruth Anne; step-children Linda Brown, Susan Bingaman; eight grandchildren; four step-grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; one step-great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 14 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Holsopple, James E., 53, New Paris, Ind., died Nov. 26, 2005. Spouse: Kathleen Yoder Holsopple. Parents: Emery an d Mary Miller Holsopple. Children: Darin, Eric. Funeral: Nov. 30 at East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Knepp, Mary Ann Rhodes, 100, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 18, 2005. Spouse: John Knepp (deceased). Parents: George and Lizzie Hershberger Rhodes. Children: Clayton, Cleo, John; 17 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren; 14 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Liechty, Wayne Joseph, 82, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 26, 2005. Spouse: Loveda Lederman Liechty. Parents: Joseph C. and Emma Frey Liechty. Children: Shirlyn Graber, Ellen Lehman, Christopher; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 29 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Nofziger, Alvin, 74, Wauseon, Ohio, died Dec. 19, 2005. Spouse: Florence King Nofziger. Parents: Clarence and Ida Yoder Nofziger. Children: Jeff, Patsy Jackson, Jodi Spiess; six grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Rohrer, Clarence W., 90, Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 2, 2005. Spouse: Alma M. Hershey Rohrer. Parents: Peter L. and Bertha Wenger Rohrer. Children: Carol Bowman, Elaine Hostetter, Gary; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 8 in Lancaster, Pa.

Roth, Roy Daniel, 84, Eugene, Ore., died Dec. 15, 2005. Spouse: Carolyn Byler Roth. Parents: Samuel and Etta Ropp Roth. Children: Veronica Roth-Finigan, Rebecca Roth Schenck, Jill, Luke, David Roy (deceased); six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 21 at Wesley United Methodist Church, Eugene.

Stauffer, Edna Beckler, 79, Sarasota, Fla., died Dec. 7, 2005. Spouse: Wallace Stauffer. Parents: William and Anna Ruth Beckler. Child: Wade; five grandchildren. Burial: Dec. 12 at Trissels Mennonite Church Cemetery, Broadway, Va.

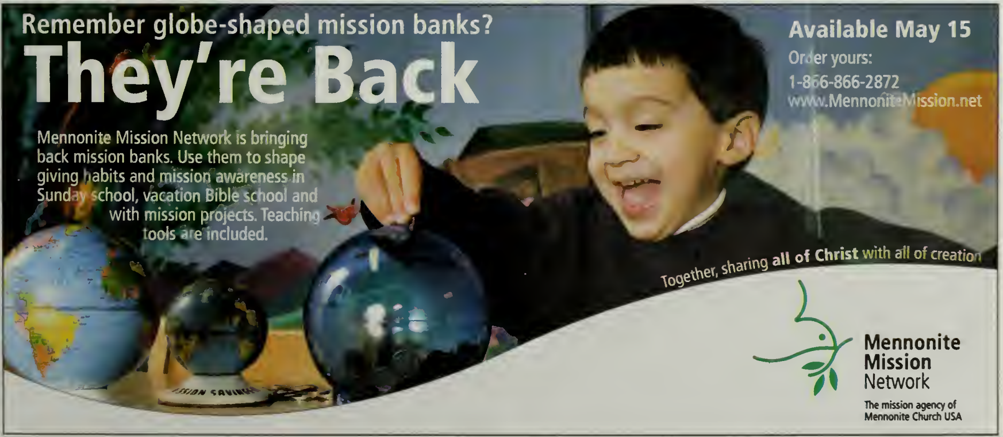
Stacy, Edith Montgomery, 95, Wayland, Iowa, died Dec. 15, 2005. Spouse: Raymond Stacy (deceased). Children: Jean Shafranck, Lowell, Lyle; 13 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Wayland Mennonite Church.

Weaver, Mary Hoover, 86, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 22, 2005. Spouse: Virgil Weaver (deceased). Parents: J. William and Celeste Kauffman Hoover. Children: Julia Kennell, Verda, Carol Pope, Orlo (deceased); five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 26 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Yoder, John D., 84, Minot, N.D., died Nov. 2, 2005. Spouse: Kathryn Gregory Yoder. Parents: Jesse and Edna King Yoder. Children: Gregory (deceased), Pamela Metzler, Carol Timm; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 7 at Prairie Peace Fellowship, Surrey, N.D.

Yoder, Paul R. Sr., 98, Harrisonburg, Va., died Nov. 29, 2005. Spouse: Grace Wingard Yoder. Parents: Jacob Z. and Susie Beiler Yoder. Children: Paul R. Jr., N. Wayne, Richard A., Larry E.; 10 grandchildren; four step-grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: Dec. 3 at Weavers Mennonite Church Cemetery, Harrisonburg.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.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Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society seeks one or more individuals interested in operating the 1719 Herr House and managing Society fund-raising programs. Position(s) may be offered as two part-time positions or combined as a single, full-time position.

Herr House director leads the daily operation of the historic site, including budget, finance, marketing, advertising, grounds, newsletter and special events. Excellent administration and communication skills required. Owned and operated by the Historical Society, the site is a colonial, living-history museum with programs for school-age children, bus tour groups and walk-in tourists.

Society development manager plans and executes fund-raising for the organization. Demonstrated ability to identify existing and new constituencies, develop appropriate media materials, coordinate current and new fund-raising efforts, expand the donor base and increase current giving levels beyond current $170,000 required.

Preference given to candidates with relevant college degree and understanding of Anabaptist-Mennonite history. Begins March 1. Clearly indicate interest in full-time position or one part-time position. To apply, send a letter of application and a resumé of relevant education and work experience to: Personnel, LMHS, 2215 Millstream Rd, Lancaster, PA 17602 or email lmhs@lmhs.org.

Bluffton University (Ohio) seeks applicants for the position of ***campus pastor.*** The campus pastor nurtures and coordinates spiritual life and serves as a pastor to the campus community. The candidate will have an appreciation for and be supportive of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith perspective and possess a Master of Divinity (or equivalent degree). More detailed information about this position is available at http://www.bluffton.edu/about/employment/.

Atlantic Coast Conference seeks ***part-time (50 percent) conference minister*** to join conference ministry team in providing leadership resources and oversight ministry with member congregations. For additional information and to apply, please contact Warren Tyson, phone 800-238-0126 or 717-355-0550; warrent@frontiernet.net; 115 East Main St., New Holland, PA 17557.

The Schowalter Foundation, Inc., located in Newton, Kan., seeks applications for the position of ***president and general manager.***

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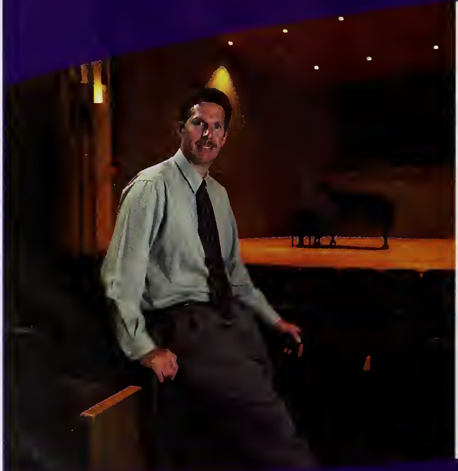
Denominational relationship: supportive of the Mennonite faith, its ideals, values, programs and institutions. Must live or relocate to Central Kansas area. To apply for this position, submit letter and resumé, including references to The Schowalter Foundation, Job Application, 900 N. Poplar, Ste. 200, Newton, KS 67114-1969, by Feb. 20. A detailed job description is available upon request.



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Seeking ***elementary school principal*** for July 2006. **Chicago Mennonite Learning Center**, a small, Christian, urban school K-8. Commitment to the vision of providing quality Christian education with an Anabaptist emphasis in the ethnic and economic diversity of the city. Responsibilities include general administration, business management, educational supervision, supervision of overall maintenance. Administrator supervises staff of 15, coordinates volunteer services and reports to board of directors. Desirable qualifications: teaching and administrative experience, master's degree in education or related field and active membership in Mennonite or other peace church.

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New position: ***independent living manager***

Seeking a mature individual who is self-motivated and comfortable being responsible for 150 residents and coordinating a team of 45 associates. A college degree and/or experience in working with older people is required. This full-time administrative position will focus on programming for independent living, catered living, assisted living and a new Alzheimer's program. Current facilities include the retirement home, the Commons, the Meadows and a projected campus center.

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Why read novels?

Gordon Houser

We seem to live in a world now where all thoughts are focused on the idea of prevailing, of imposing one's beliefs on others, and no thoughts, no thoughts are given to the costs of prevailing, or even what it means. Have these people never read Moby-Dick? *Well, no, they haven't.*—Jane Smiley

Despite the blockbusters on the bestseller lists, most people don't read novels. And of those who do, fewer read for more than entertainment. And many Christians think of novels as lies. They only want to read "the truth," as if nonfiction, or mere facts, represented truth.

That's too bad, because good fiction helps us understand and appreciate our world and often aids our moral development. Jane Smiley's book *13 Ways of Looking at the Novel* (Knopf, 2005, $26.95) offers many reasons for reading novels and how to better understand them.

Her 13 ways include a definition of the novel as "a lengthy, written, prose narrative with a protagonist." She goes on to look at the origins, psychology, morality and art of the novel.

In one chapter she considers how the novel has affected and been affected by history. She writes that novels "expose general problems and analyze them in terms of cause and effect," then "propose solutions that apply to a few privileged characters; when these solutions are disseminated, readers claim at least the possibility of such solutions for themselves." Thus novels have played a role in making accessible and honoring the lives and concerns of women, the poor and criminals, among others (*Moll Flanders* being one example).

Novels help us learn empathy. Writing about Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Smiley writes that "it is the empathy that is essential to the success of a good novel that has changed the way we respond to appearances." This has implications for how we respond to racism, for example.

Novels help make us better people. "When I have read a long novel ... [and] become interested in another person because he is interesting, not because he is privileged or great," Smiley writes, "there is a possibility that at the end I will be a degree less self-centered than I was at the beginning, that I will be a degree more able to see the world as another sees it."

Many of the bestselling novels are simplistic. They are consumed like candy and provide little nourishment for one's soul. Good fiction, on the other hand, brings us closer to reality, to the intimate truth of how people experience the world. Smiley writes, "Complexity is more fun as well as more true."

She goes on to look at over 100 novels through history. Even if you're not an avid reader, she may whet your appetite. Pick up a good novel.

FILMS

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (PG) follows closely the C.S. Lewis book, with some exceptions. A positive one is establishing the World War II setting for the children leaving London for the country. A negative one is the amount of attention given to the battle, which takes up only two pages in the book. Georgie Henley, who plays Lucy, stands out.

Syriana (R) is is one of the few films that assumes an intelligent audience willing to grapple with difficult issues. What drives the complicated plot—and what drives Middle Eastern politics, according to this film—is oil. Any concern for human welfare goes out the window in the face of pursuing control of oil production. The film opens up a world we don't want to think about and forces us to.

Munich (R) is the story of a team of assassins Israel sent to Europe to kill Palestinians behind the murder of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, Germany. While it is clearly pro-Israeli, it shows the futility and the moral cost of vengeance.

BEST BOOKS OF 2005

13 Ways of Looking at the Novel by Jane Smiley

The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami? by David Bentley Hart

The Gospel According to America: A Meditation on a God-blessed, Christ-haunted Idea by David Dark

The March: A Novel by E.L. Doctorow

A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed by James D.G. Dunn

BOOKS

The Nazareth Jesus Knew by Joel Kauffmann (Herald Press, 2005, $16.95 plus shipping) is a beautiful coffee table book exploring first-century Nazareth as recreated by Nazareth Village. Designed by Merrill Miller with photos by D. Michael Hostetler and others, the book includes fascinating historical and archaeological information about the village where Jesus grew up. For more information go to www.nazarethvillage.com.

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln by Doris Kearns Goodwin (Simon & Schuster, 2005, $35) profiles the genius of Lincoln as he brings political rivals into his occasionally dysfunctional cabinet. To set the stage for Lincoln's ascendency, Goodwin charts his influence among the many Whigs and Democrats who formed the Republican Party in the late 1850s—primarily to fight against slavery. After Lincoln wins the new party's nomination against better-known national figures—each of whom believed he was more deserving than the gangly back woodsman from Illinois—Lincoln adroitly woos each into his cabinet using the protocols of the day. But just as today's Republican Party little resembles the party that came to power in 1860, today's political scene does not resemble the national milieu before and during the Civil War. Any attempt to apply Lincoln's team-building to 2006 will be anachronistic. Goodwin's strongest theme is one she addresses often: Lincoln's sterling character and deep melancholy during the war that killed far more U.S. citizens than any other our country has fought.—*Everett J. Thomas*

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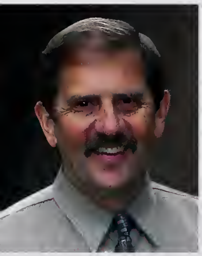

Everett J. Thomas

Presidential leadership

Three of the five Mennonite Church USA colleges and universities named new presidents in the last six months. The choices are encouraging: All have a high view of the church, as evidenced by their lives and experiences.

The down side to these appointments is that after having two women serve as college presidents—Shirley H. Showalter and Lee Snyder—we will now have no women presidents. Furthermore, no racial/ethnic member has yet been given an opportunity to lead in such a setting.

But we do have a cadre of college and university presidents who care deeply about the church. The appointments of Howard Keim at Hesston (Kan.) College, Jim Harder at Bluffton (Ohio) University and Jim Brenneman at Goshen (Ind.) College reveal that each school intends to strengthen its relationship with Mennonite Church USA. These leaders can help each campus move even closer to the church.

During his inaugural address at Hesston last October, Keim illustrated such a commitment by citing his school's legacy .

"We have inherited an institution that is known for its closeness to the church," Keim said, "and for its sense of community and its academic excellence. … We must take the faith, the hope and the love of those who came before us and honor it with our own. We must not only teach the Bible but introduce students to Jesus himself."

Colleges and universities owned by Mennonite Church USA must balance their academic DNA with their churchly DNA.

Keim was pastor of Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church from 1979 to 1987 and youth minister at Fairview (Mich.) Mennonite Church prior to that. Keim is also a former moderator of South Central Conference of Mennonite Church USA and has served on that conference's ministerial leadership commission.

Harder and Brenneman have not yet been inaugurated to their offices, but their involvements across the denomination inspire confidence. Harder's fingerprints, for example, are all over the merger process that combined the former Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church.

"Very few persons have contributed as much to the formation of Mennonite Church USA as Jim Harder," says Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA. "His knowledge, wisdom and enthusiasm for this new venture in our generation have greatly influenced who we are as a church and who we are becoming."

Harder's career includes nearly five years in international settings: as a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer teacher in Garissa, Kenya, and as a program consultant in Bangladesh and India. He also served with Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) in Tanzania.

Brenneman comes to the Goshen College post directly from a long-term pastorate at Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church, which he helped found. He also has served in leadership roles in Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference and in the former Mennonite Church.

"He would bring … the mind of a scholar, the vision and determination of a leader and the heart of a pastor," said Mennonite Education Agency executive director Carlos Romero when Brenneman was introduced as a candidate last November.

All three men also have excellent academic credentials—necessary for credibility on the campuses where they will serve. Academic culture on college and university campuses does not naturally orient to the church. That is because most faculty members are trained in one of the classical disciplines; the synergy among those secular disciplines is the crucible for a liberal arts education.

But colleges and universities owned by Mennonite Church USA will always need to balance their academic DNA with their churchly DNA. It is because of this balancing act that the choice of a president is so important. The selections of Keim, Harder and Brenneman will give us the best of academics and the best of church.

In the long run, these selections will help both our denomination and the schools that provide so many influences throughout our church.—*ejt*

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February 7, 2006

a gardener of kindness

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Gloria Lizcano (right) with her friend Ana in Colombia

FEB - 6 2006
AMBS Library

Transformed by God's power

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

I think I am having a midlife crisis. I'm not the little red sports car type. Instead I enrolled in a Doctor of Ministry program at Lancaster (Pa.) Theological Seminary. It seemed the right thing to do in response to my crisis.

As my 50th birthday looms ever larger, I've found myself asking questions of personal and professional meaning. Does what I do matter? Does it count for anything beyond the proverbial vanity? Has my work resulted in anything lasting, in changed hearts or minds or behaviors? Was it, whatever it may be, worth it?

I've come to realize that these personal midlife questions form the backdrop for the subject of my D.Min. work. I am interested in learning what connection there may be between worship and ethics. More specifically, I'd like to know how worship forms us into better, more Christian, people. Do the practices of worship, things such as praying and Communion and baptism and hearing the Scriptures read and interpreted, make us more Christlike? Do they shape not only our spiritual lives but also our behavior?

When I consider the history of Christianity, I admit the evidence does not seem to support an affirmative answer. The church's failings, past and present, are too many to count. On the face of it, one would be hard pressed to argue that Christian worship has resulted in a holy, just, peaceful or compassionate people of God. Our sins are myriad and continue to beleaguer us some 2,000 years after our Savior's birth.

In a recent conversation about my project, a fellow student said, "You're going to have to write about sin." She was excited about this prospect. I was less so. But she is right.

Thinking of Christian formation requires thinking about human sin, that great countervailing force against which our practices work. It is our own sin that makes our history so riddled with failures of every kind and proportion.

It is right to say that the practices of Christian worship work against or resist the effects of human sin. The practice of confession, for example, calls our sin by name and makes us aware of the need for God's mercy and grace. The practice of assurance or absolution reminds us that such mercy and grace are not only available but freely given. The practice of reading Scripture reminds us of our place in the created world and in God's saving work. The practice of prayer reminds us that we are not independent actors but dependent creatures preserved by and accountable to the Creator.

Engaging in these practices reveals the truth about us human beings and about the God we worship. That truth, particularly when proclaimed regularly in worship, cannot help but move us at least a little closer to the image of God in Christ.

The practices of worship are not magical acts that have within themselves the power to remake us. They are not good works for which we can expect to be rewarded.

And whatever power they have to transform does not come from us. What is transformative about such acts is the presence of God in and through them.

It is that transformative power of God that I am excited about exploring. Not so I can bottle it up or package it, having found some perfect formula for personal and congregational formation. Our practices depend too much on the Spirit for any such scheme. That Spirit, we know, moves and gifts and empowers according to God's designs, not our own.

It may be that what I really want to know in my midlife is not so much how well I have done but how much God has done. How am I, how are we, being transformed daily by God's power? That's a midlife question worth pursuing. TM

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 3, February 7, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Cover image of Gloria Lizcano and friend Ana by Emily S. Will

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 40033185, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526

Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Stop publishing letters

Continuing to print letters and articles regarding Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church's voting rights being removed and their support for gay membership is harmful to the Mennonite church as a whole. Though I believe every voice should be heard, a minority stance should not be in issue after issue of *The Mennonite*. It was our denomination's same method of listening to this minority voice for too long during our recent merger that lost us so many churches and many members (thus our financial woes). When a vote finally was allowed to happen, our denomination overwhelmingly supported our current stance of not allowing practicing homosexual membership. Continually revisiting this issue in our magazine gives the perception to many members and the outside world that our denomination is actually considering gay membership, yet we are not. Hyattsville discussions should be with their conference.—*Wes Culver, Goshen, Ind.*

Congregation not free to redefine sin

Melvin Schmidt is right when he says that Mennonite Church USA conferences ought to be consistent in how they call congregations to be guided by our confession of faith ("Hyattsville Mennonite Church Follows Jesus," Dec. 20, 2005). However, the logic of his application is flawed. The problem is that congregations that welcome practicing gays and lesbians as members have established policies that welcome "believers" who have committed themselves to regularly yield to their besetting sin rather than repenting of and seeking to resist that sin.

Any congregation establishing a policy that welcomes "believers" who regularly yield to sins of murder, sexual abuse, adultery, theft, greed or gossip should be disciplined in the same way. But Mennonite Church USA congregations that respond redemptively to sin in the lives of their members by calling them to repentance and lives of faithful discipleship are doing the work of the kingdom, and should be considered congregations in good standing. The real issue in this case is whether congregations should be free to redefine sin in ways that differ from the confession of faith yet remain in good standing within the denomination. Schmidt says yes, but Allegheny Mennonite Conference and the Constituency Leaders' Council have correctly said no.—*Karl Landis, Lancaster, Pa.*

Where is loving dialogue?

I have been wondering if and when Mennonite Church USA will engage in "loving dialogue" on the subject of homosexuality called for in the Human Sexuality Statement adopted at Saskatoon '86 and Purdue '87. I do appreciate the bits of dialogue we have in Readers Say, but sometimes these comments are not "loving" or helpful in understanding another's point of view.

By the way, does anyone know what happened to the report of the Listening Committee for Homosexual Concerns back in the early 1990s? I thought the committee was supposed to be an instrument for "loving dialogue," listening to people on both sides of this issue and then sharing their findings. I don't recall ever reading about that report.—*Ruby S. Lehman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Editor's note: The report is available from Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries files in the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee archives in Goshen, Ind.

We are no longer thankful worshipers

Re the changing "giving" patterns among Mennonite Church USA members and a lowered commitment to supporting the ministries of the denomination ("Stewardship Surprises," Jan. 10): The problem is not in where the money is going. The problem is where it is coming from and why it is given in the first place.

We live in the midst of a super-consumer society where "getting your money's worth" has become the motivation behind putting something in the offering plate on Sunday morning, and where we behave as if Always Low Prices (the WalMart slogan) is the highest form of stewardship.

The truth is that giving to denominational programs is falling because we are no longer thankful worshipers giving in response to God's love for us. Rather we have become demanding consumers buying good feelings as cheaply as possible. We

IN THIS ISSUE

The story about the life and death of Gloria Lizcano—a modern-day Dorcas (Acts 9)—embodies the genuine love demonstrated by the original St. Valentine (page 8). "One person committed to living out the gospel of Jesus Christ can grow flowers in places that need them—not just gardens of actual blossoms but virtual gardens of kindness," writes Emily Will. Lizcano died on Nov. 26, 2005, when struck in the street by a motorcycle in the Colombian president's motorcade. A second extraordinary story is the success another woman is finding as she writes mystery novels (page 12). Judy Clemens Smucker's most recent book should be read by all Mennonite ministers "because of the way it talks about issues of the church," says one minister (who is also her father).—*Editor* have become careful investors looking for the best returns for our donations.

I fear that unless we begin worshiping God with our offerings instead of our own need to be pleased or prudent, the Mennonite Church USA electricity bill will need to be paid by the last person to leave the office when it finally closes for good. To quote an eminent theologian from the past, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." *—Lynn Miller, MMA stewardship theologian*

Church people should do better

In "Church People Should Do Better" (Nov. 15, 2005), Al Albrecht pointed out procedural problems at the Great Lakes Conference's meeting on Oct. 13, 2001. In response, Dale Shank (Readers Say, Dec. 6, 2005) justified the Great Lakes decision to allow no amendments to the main motion by saying the decision was not his alone. I would have preferred that Shank defend what he and others did by sharing their arguments for such a procedure. Tom Kauffman and Allen Rutter (also in Readers Say, Dec. 6, 2005) justified the decisions to permit absentee votes because of scheduling conflicts, prior consultations and the seriousness with which the absentee delegates took their assignments.

A number of points made by Albrecht deserve further consideration. The requirement for a super majority has always been troublesome for me. The argument is often made that a proposed action requires a super majority in order to ensure substantial support for the course of action. What about the majority whose will is denied? Does this permit a small group that resist change to frustrate the will of the majority? Fortunately, Albrecht suggests other courses of action such as a member of the majority (not the minority) making a motion to reconsider the action.

Even better, is Albrecht's suggestion that support can be determined before a course of action is taken. Those in support of a particular course of action and those that are opposed should then have the opportunity to present their point of view in light of new information.*—Earl Sutter, Goshen, Ind.*

The bigotry of low expectations

In "Hope Amid Fear" (Editorial, Dec. 6, 2005), Everett J. Thomas lauds Jordan as an icon of dignity and reason in responding to it's own "9-11" tragedy. Unfortunately, Thomas' inspirational piece quickly became an essay in rewriting historical facts. To their credit, Jordan is the only country that liberated refugees from U.N.-sponsored camps by offering them citizenship instead. However, the number of Palestinian refugees that fled the wars against Israel are less than 1 million in total and scattered among countries including Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

"In 1967, Israel took part of [Jordan's] country that is on the west side of the Jordan river," Thomas writes. Correction: Israel captured this territory in a defensive war it was fighting for its very existence. In addition, this territory between Israel and the Jordan River did not legally belong to Jordan. It had been set aside by virtue of a U.N. vote in 1948 for a Palestinian state, a decision rejected by every Arab state including Jordan, which illegally occupied it from 1948 to 1967. And as far as Jordan being a country that "accepts responsibility as custodian for so many important biblical sites," as Thomas says: Does the desecration and destruction of the world's oldest and largest Jewish cemetery in 1948 count as responsible custodianship?

Don't misunderstand. Jordan is the best of all Arab governments in the Middle East and looks good next to all of them. But let's not be guilty of the bigotry of low expectations. Unfortunately, Christian pacifists like Thomas constantly mistake pacifism for feel-good comfort—even going so far as to change important historical facts.*—Akiva Gavriel, Chicago*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

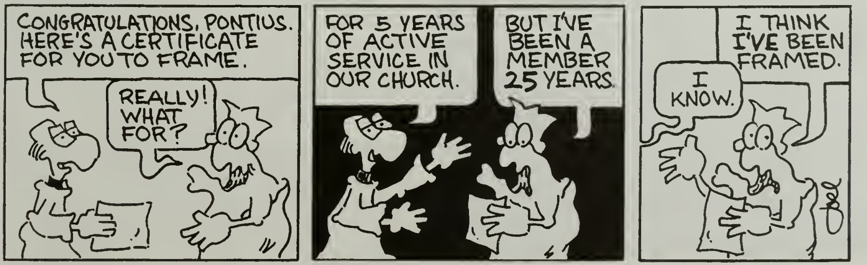
I read murder mysteries (67 votes):

○ Sometimes (30%)
○ Often (15%)
○ Never (55%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Correction: In Harold Miller's letter in Jan. 24 Readers Say, the dates for Saskatoon and Purdue were reversed. It should read Saskatoon '86 and Purdue '87.

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**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Joel

IN BRIEF

Music and worship leaders weekend

More than 240 people gathered Jan. 6-8 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., for the 19th annual Music and Worship Leaders Weekend. Participants represented 84 congregations from California to New York and Ontario to Florida. Well-known songwriter, storyteller and preacher John Bell, from the Iona Community in Scotland, spoke about the Psalms. Ken Nafziger, professor of music at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., introduced Bell as someone at the top of his "truthteller list, speaking with clarity and directness." *—Cheryl Paulovich*

Project to support earthquake-affected families

Through the next year, Mennonite Central Committee will support 10 families, or about 100 people, in a Pakistan-controlled area of Kashmir devastated by an Oct. 8, 2005, earthquake. MCC is working through JAKCISS Oriental Rugs, an artisan group of Ten Thousand Villages, on the multifaceted project, which includes identifying job opportunities such as woodworking. MCC will also provide aid for food and basic necessities for these families and assistance in building temporary homes and earthquake-resistant houses.*—MCC*

CPTers' captors release video, make demand

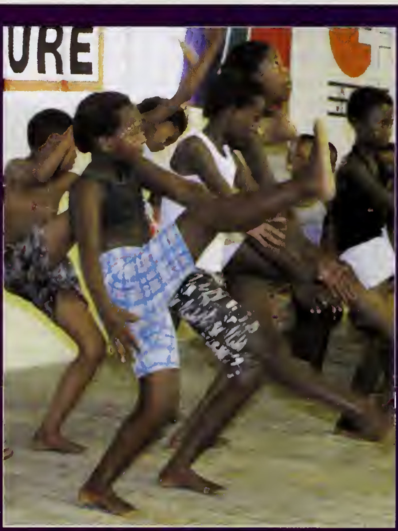
CHICAGO—The insurgent group holding four kidnapped Christian Peacemaker Teams activists has given U.S. and Iraqi authorities a "last chance" to free all detainees in their custody. Though no deadline was set, the Swords of Righteousness Brigade said it would kill the four activists if their conditions were not met.

The latest demand—the first word of the four CPTers since before Dec. 10, when a previous deadline set by the captors passed—came in a video aired Jan. 28 on the Aljazeera network.

The four CPTers—Briton Norman Kember, 74, American Tom Fox, 54, and Canadians James Loney, 41, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32—were seized at gunpoint in Baghdad on Nov. 26.

The latest video, which was dated Jan. 21, showed the four CPTers standing by a wall, and then seated. They appeared to be speaking to the camera, but their voices could not be heard.

In a statement released Jan. 28, CPT said: "All of us in Christian Peacemaker Teams remain very disturbed by the abduction of our teammates. We pray that those who hold them will host them with the grace that so many of us in CPT have received as guests in Iraq. James, Harmeet, Norman and Tom are peace workers who have not collaborated with the occupation of Iraq and who have worked for justice for all Iraqis, especially those detained." *—CPT*



Wayne Gehman

Jumping for joy in the family of God

Worship in South African Pentecostal churches can be extremely active, says Phil Lindell Detweiler, but after hearing stories of God's work in church members' lives, he sees there are reasons they jump for joy. The Lindell Detweiler family moved last December to South Africa, where they serve as church-based community development workers with Mennonite Mission Network. They are members of Pleasant View Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. *—Mennonite Mission Network*

Hispanic Ministries director connects cultures

ELKHART, Ind.—Last month, Mauricio Chenlo began as Hispanic mission training academy program director, a new position created through a partnership between Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church) and Mennonite Mission Network. Chenlo joins the Mission Network's U.S. Ministries team, allowing the North Carolina-based pastor and church planter to work with conferences, congregations and partnerships to help them develop Hispanic programs based on their individual strengths.

Mauricio Chenlo

A native of Argentina, Chenlo says children of first-generation Hispanic immigrants are being educated in the United States through high school, college and seminary, bridging gaps between home cultures and North America. He believes that promoting leadership programs for young adults who have the language and cultural skills to thrive in traditional multiple ethnic cultures will be key to the future of the church.

While the Instituto Bíblico Anabautista (Anabaptist Biblical Institute) offers biblical and theological training, Chenlo says churches "also need a set of tools to organize a group of people to plant a church"—his mandate is to help provide those tools. He says IBA, IMH and Mennonite Mission Network will work together with the Hispanic Mennonite community as it evolves.

Chenlo is associate pastor for youth at Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church and an urban ministry director for Mennonite Mission Network in partnership with Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and the Eastern Carolina District. *—Mennonite Mission Network*

Nursing program addresses Kansas shortage

HESSTON, Kan.—The director of the nursing program at Hesston College says the program is doing all it can to tackle the shortage of nurses in Kansas.

Linda Shelly

nsas church works with Brazilians on church

ry Goering helps prepare a renovated grocery store for inting before it was dedicated as a church on Jan. 21. She s one of 10 people from First Mennonite Church, Newton, n., who responded to an invitation sent by the Mennonite urch in Brazil to Mennonite Mission Network for a work am. For nearly two weeks last month, the group worked side side with the Brazilian congregation, Comunidade angélica Menonita, which anticipates greater ministry and treach opportunities from its new location in a commercial ea. The group had maximized and outgrown a house in a arby residential area.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Director Bonnie Sowers reports that 88 of the 104 graduates (85 percent) during the past three years took their first nursing job somewhere in Kansas. The other 16 are working in other states. Solid statistics aren't available for the 1,088 graduates from Hesston's nursing program since the first class of 13 graduated in 1968, but Sowers estimates at least half live and work in Kansas.

A report submitted to Governor Kathleen Sebelius and the 2006 legislature by the Kansas Board of Regents last month indicated the state will need more than 11,000 new nurses by the year 2010.

At the request of the Hesston College Board of Overseers about two years ago, Sowers and her faculty and staff began increasing the number of students enrolled in the college's nursing program to address the shortage and to assist more students in meeting their career goals. The aim was to admit the maximum number of students allowed by the Kansas State Board of Nursing—48 per class.

In the fall of 2003, 40 freshman and 30 sophomores were admitted, a pattern similar to the previous fall. Then in the fall of 2004, 48 freshman and 46 sophomores matriculated, an increase of 31 percent over the fall of 2003.

Last fall, 48 freshman and 48 sophomores were accepted for admission, while 10 additional fully qualified applicants were not accepted and were placed on a waiting list. "I would be surprised if we don't have a significant wait list for next fall," Sowers says.—*Hesston College*

EMS honors pastors for 50 years of ministry

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg honored veteran pastors Jan. 18 for 50 years of church ministry.

H. Michael Shenk, William M. Weaver, Eldon King and M. Lloyd Weaver Jr. received plaques and letters of commendation during a banquet held during the annual School for Leadership Training.

Their spouses—Peggy B. Shenk, Viola Weaver, Dorothy King and Sarah M. Weaver—were also cited for their "significant supportive roles" over the years.

Ervin R. Stutzman, dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, made the presentations at the recognition ceremony. "These pastors represent perseverance and success in ministry," Stutzman said. "But more importantly, they have demonstrated a passion for evangelism where they are and have been mentors to others."—*Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

Dustin Combs

Goshen sings gospel on Martin Luther King Day

At Goshen College's 13th annual all-school Martin Luther King Jr. Study Day Jan. 16 (left to right) senior Will Velez, junior Samuel Nicholson, junior Victor Oyeyemi, first-year Danielle Nelson and first-year Samantha Gordon, members of Goshen's Voices-n-Harmony Gospel choir, sing songs of praise. Voices-n-Harmony includes students, faculty, staff and community members from a diverse mix of cultural backgrounds and ages.—*Goshen College*

IN BRIEF

More soldiers want CO status

The number of soldiers applying for conscientious objector status has been growing, according to the *Washington Post* (Dec. 31, 2005)—some 110 in 2004, or four times the number in 2000. The GI Rights Hotline operated by the Center on Conscience and War said it received more than 36,000 calls in 2005 from soldiers asking about how they can get out of the service, compared with fewer than 1,000 a year before the war in Iraq began.—*The Christian Century*

Six nations top earth-friendly list; U.S. is 28th

A pilot study of environmental performance shows that just six nations—led by New Zealand, followed by five from Northern Europe—have achieved 85 percent or better success in meeting a set of critical environmental goals, including clean water, low ozone levels, sustainable fisheries and low greenhouse gas emissions. The study, jointly produced by Yale and Columbia universities, ranks the United States 28th overall, behind most of Western Europe, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Costa Rica and Chile. Called the 2006 Environmental Performance Index, the study was intended to focus more attention on how various governments have played the environmental hands they have been dealt. —*New York Times*

A gardener

Remembering Gloria Lizcano
# of kindness

by Emily S. Will

In Acts 9, we read of the grief-stricken Christians in Joppa upon the death—sudden and unexpected—of the beloved disciple Dorcas, a woman bursting with good works and charitable deeds. So great were their feelings of loss that they asked the apostle Peter, visiting the nearby town of Lydda, to come help them through their mourning.

Last fall a current-day Dorcas, Gloria Lizcano of Bogotá, Colombia, was killed, leaving a mourning community similar to that of Joppa. Those who knew and loved her reside not just in Bogotá but in many other parts of the world as well. Upon learning of her death, they turned to email and the Internet to console one another and share information in an effort to ameliorate their pain. I know because that's what I did as part of the extended Christian community shocked to learn of the abrupt death of this virtuous woman.

The facts of her accidental death were easier to understand than what they implied about the state of Colombian society. The facts are that on the evening of Nov. 26, 2005, on a city street near the small apartment she shared with her two grown children, Gloria was run over by a motorcycle, part of the Colombian president's motorcade. She died shortly thereafter. She was 55.

Gloria was walking home after having picked up the church bulletins at the home of Peter Stucky, pastor of Teusaquillo Mennonite Church. (The Stuckys, Lizcanos and several other church families live within walking distance of one another in the Teusaquillo neighborhood of central Bogotá, near the national university.) Gloria

Last fall a current-day Dorcas, Gloria Lizcano of Bogotá, Colombia, was killed, leaving a mourning community similar to that of Joppa.

Continued on page 10

A legacy like Dorcas: Gloria Lizcano (right) with Ana

Continued from page 9

picked up the bulletins every Saturday evening. At home, she folded them so they'd be ready for the following morning's two services.

Oasis of kindness: Gloria wanted Sunday church services to feel hospitable—both to regular participants and newcomers. Bogotá, the capital, can be a harsh city, and it has become the destination (often of last choice) for people around the country who are pushed from their homes by armed groups vying for Colombia's considerable wealth. Teusaquillo Mennonite Church sponsors programs to help some of the displaced, and some attend Sunday worship services. Who needs a warm reception more than these homeless, often persecuted souls? Gloria wanted to make sure that all who came through the doors felt welcomed. She could help create an oasis of kindness and friendliness in an impersonal city. Among other things, this meant she was the first to arrive at church on Sunday mornings and the last to leave in the early afternoon.

Gloria wanted to make sure that all who came through the doors felt welcomed. She could help create an oasis of kindness and friendliness in an impersonal city.

Last July, I was on the receiving end of Gloria's conviviality. I was in Colombia with two other members of a sister-church delegation from Shalom Mennonite Fellowship in Tucson, Ariz. I first met Gloria when she stopped by to pick me up, to accompany me to her apartment the second and last week of our visit. As soon as I met her I knew I was in good hands. I was not mistaken. We got along from the get-go. Gloria was not just kind; she was also fun and funny, with an impish sense of humor.

Since learning of Gloria's passing, I've shared the congregation's grief. I've also felt anger at the country's wealthy and powerful. Gloria's death was not intentional, in the sense that an armed group had targeted her. Yet she was just one more of countless unnecessary victims—"collateral" casualties—in the death engine that drives Colombia.

The motorcade that transports President Álvaro Uribe drives at recklessly high speeds through city streets. The speeding is purposeful, an effort to shield the president from anyone who may want to harm him. His comings and goings are kept unannounced, and his convoy moves quickly. Pedestrians are not necessarily a factor in this security calculus, in this everyone-for-himself mentality.

Gloria did not accept a me-first attitude. It didn't gel with whom she was. What's more, it was part of a mindset she had cast off when she became a Christian. In his sermon at Gloria's funeral, Pastor Stucky explained how this came to be and why Gloria became tireless in doing good. When Gloria was a new Christian in the 1980s, a friend in her church (Berna Mennonite, in south central Bogotá) was diagnosed with cancer. Gloria wanted to do something special for her but didn't get around to it, and the friend died.

"This left a profound lesson in her, which she summarized in the phrase, 'Whatever we can do in life, we must do,'" Stucky says.

Contagious smile: Gloria became a cheerful adherent of her chosen motto. I doubt anyone in the Teusaquillo congregation has a photo of Gloria sitting down. There are photos of her standing by the church door, where she posted herself to greet arrivals, to care for anyone needing help or to be able to intervene in any situation that might disrupt church services. There are photos of Gloria at church with a tea towel over her forearm, of her helping her elderly friend Ana prepare after-service coffee. There are photos of Gloria embracing Ana in a big hug. In all the photos, Gloria wears her contagious smile. But there are no photos of Gloria sitting and taking it easy.

Only death could bring Gloria to rest. President Uribe and his wife, Lina Maria, did attend Gloria's funeral. The president's military guard even conceded to the congregation's request that no weapons be brought into the church. (Ironically, Gloria's son John, who works on behalf of conscientious objectors in this militarized country, sat next to Uribe at his mother's funeral.)

Gloria had a special heart for older people and frequently visited the home for the elderly run by the Mennonite churches of Bogotá.

As one of Gloria's close friends, Martha Santanilla, put it, "I'm sure President Uribe never would have guessed that Gloria was a woman who was so appreciated by so many, surrounded by a community that loved her dearly, a community that speaks for peace, forgiveness and for another reality distinct from the violence around us."

Gloria, a woman simple by the world's standards—no big degrees, few material goods, renting a small, rundown apartment in an old area of Bogotá—was beloved. Phone calls and emails of grief and shocked disbelief poured in from friends throughout Colombia and from other counties, including some from displaced people now living as political asylees in Canada.

'Adorable women': A church member working as a volunteer in Brazil wrote: "I always sat at the ushers' table during the service because I felt so comfortable next to those smiling women, among them Gloria, who always greeted me with a sincere smile and hug. She would prepare a cup of healthy herbal tea for me, and she carried a bag of round coconut cookies that she took out to share. Of all the things I most miss being here, it is that welcome from the church from those adorable women."

Marth Angel

More than coconut cookies, Gloria was known for her flowers, especially her roses. She coaxed a flower garden into existence in a postage-stamp plot next to her apartment building. She would cut some blooms and take them to those who were sick, shut in or in need of a listening ear. She also helped her friend Ana plant and tend a petite garden at the nursing home where Ana lived. Gloria had a special heart for older people and frequently visited the home for the elderly run by the Mennonite churches of Bogotá.

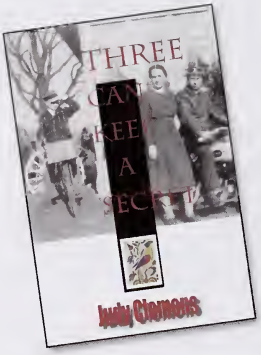
Gloria leaves a legacy similar to that of the biblical Dorcas. Her testimony, like Dorcas', is that one person committed to living out the gospel of Jesus Christ can grow flowers in places that need them—not just gardens of actual blossoms but virtual gardens of kindness. May the Holy Spirit grant strength to those who mourn her loss, especially to her two adult children, John and Andrea, as they carry on without her.

Emily Will is a member of Shalom Mennonite Fellowship in Tucson, Ariz.

Author Judy Clemens writes about bikers and Mennonites.

Mennonite mystery writer

by Cathleen Hockman-Wert



Study the cover of *Three Can Keep a Secret* to find the first clues that this isn't a typical mystery novel. A grainy black and white photo pictures a plainly dressed woman with covering strings dangling from her hair. Holmes-caliber sleuths will identify the drawing underneath as a bit of folk art fraktur.

Open the book, and before the story begins notice a pair of scene-setting quotations: the first a 1755 Mennonite statement against taking up "Arms to defend our King, our Country or our Selves," the second the motto of the Hell's Angels: "Three can keep a secret, if two are dead."

If this isn't enough of a study in contrasts, read on and meet Stella Crown: a prickly Bucks County, Pa., dairy farmer with a special place in her heart for motorcycles—and for her Franconia Mennonite Conference friends. She's the hero of a new series of mysteries by Judy Clemens, a member of Grace Mennonite Church in Pandora, Ohio.

Breaking further with tradition: neither *Three Can Keep a Secret* nor the series' award-winning first book, *Till the Cows Come Home*, opens with a corpse in the first chapter.

Is this a kinder, gentler, Mennonite way to write mysteries? "Not really," Clemens says. "I love mysteries, but I can get bored real quickly with that formula where the main character is always stumbling across dead bodies. It's just not real. I wanted to try something different."

Part of that difference is to create characters and scenarios that break down stereotypes—such as the image of big, bad motorcyclists. In their prechildren life, Clemens and her husband, Steve Smucker, were avid bikers. And as she puts it, "None of the people we rode with finance a string of brothels, produce methamphetamines or publish hard-core porn. They are simply nice folks who love the feel of the wind in their hair and the rumble of their bikes in their ears." She wanted to portray the good guys beneath the leather.

Clemens wasn't necessarily planning to focus on another group of folks often stereotyped by their clothes. "But after my first book, when my editor found out that I'm Mennonite, she said, 'Oh, you have to write about Mennonites. People love to hear about Mennonites.'"

Thus developed *Three Can Keep a Secret*, in which an outlaw biker gang and an MYF youth group play key roles, and Harley-Davidson chrome contrasts with a Mennonite pastor driving, naturally, "an ancient Corolla." Scrapple, *Martyrs' Mirror*, Mennonite Disaster Service, hymn #606/#118, MMA, Lancaster Conference, "welcoming" congregations, funny cake, national assemblies, "healing and hope" and Herr's potato chips all make appearances.

Yet the book presents more than the trappings of Mennonite life.

"I wanted to talk about some of the things Mennonites don't talk about," Clemens says. A prime example is conflict. As one character puts it: "Mennonites … are not

While not painting an overly rosy picture of Mennonite culture, *Three Can Keep a Secret* highlights what Clemens considers Mennonite strengths.

I wanted to talk about some of the things Mennonites don't talk about. —Judy Clemens

Courtesy photo

good at confrontation. It's much more common to keep everything inside or to talk to everyone but the person you have an issue with."

The book acknowledges disagreements among Mennonites today, such as over women in church leadership. Such struggles or flaws are simply part of being real, Clemens says.

Sometimes it's easier to raise this kind of issue in a fictional story than, say, a letter to *The Mennonite* or at an assembly. "If I get up to talk about things like this, I just cry," Clemens says. But, she continues, if the Stella Crown books get difficult topics out in the open and prompt discussion about actual relationships and congregations, all the better.

While not painting an overly rosy picture of Mennonite culture, *Three Can Keep a Secret* highlights what Clemens considers Mennonite strengths: how Mennonites come together in times of crisis, creative, peaceful ways of working through problems ("I'm going to do this the Mennonite way," one woman states grimly. "I'm going to kill them with kindness.") and the portrayal of a loving pastor.

"I grew up as the daughter of a minister," Clemens says, "and my dad—well, he's my dad, of course he's going to be supportive—says he wishes all ministers would read *Three Can Keep a Secret* because of the way it talks about issues of the church, and how the different congregations in the book relate to each other."

While the series doesn't contain much violence (few references to blood and guts are more graphic than the first book's opening scene: a cow C-section), it does have a sprinkle of profanity. Readers from eastern Pennsylvania will spot familiar landmarks. Telford, where Clemens used to live, is never named, but Perkasie and Bethlehem Pike are.

Boosted by enthusiastic fans, *Till the Cows Come Home* was nominated for two "best first novel" mystery awards, the Agatha and the Anthony. After finding a publisher for the first two Stella Crown books herself, Clemens has now, with the help of an agent, signed a contract to write three more in the series. The next, *To Thine Own Self Be True*, takes its name from the Shakespearean quote tattooed on Stella's arm and continues Clemens' stereotype-busting work with a focus on the tattoo industry. It is scheduled for release in August.

In June 2004, Clemens' one-act play "Attics" was performed at Bethany Christian Schools' 50th-anniversary celebration, and it too is now being published. To learn more about it and the Stella Crown books, visit www.judyclemens.com.

For someone rooted in a church that once banned the reading of such novels, it is a twist to become a mystery writer, Clemens admits. "But I hope the message the books get across is about Christian morals—about love, taking care of each other, being honest, having integrity," she says. "The second book doesn't have the intensity a lot of mysteries have, but most people say they like it better than the first. It's a book about family."

Cathleen Hockman-Wert is a member of Corvallis (Ore.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Stella Crown's take on Mennonite dress

A few elderly women still bore the coverings Mennonites had worn for so long, a white mesh bonnet pinned lightly to the backs of their heads. Not practical for anything, the coverings are merely a symbol of submission to God. Ma had chosen long ago to stop wearing hers, but it was mostly because she was ready for a more stylish hair-do. She thought her hair would work better in a short cut, and once she got it done she decided the covering looked … well, a bit silly.

I thought the whole idea of coverings is ridiculous, but then, no one cares what I think.—*From* Three Can Keep a Secret *by Judy Clemens (Poisoned Pen Press, 2005)*

2 in a series of six

Holistic Stewardship

The stewardship of health

Maximize the

by Roy E. Bronkema

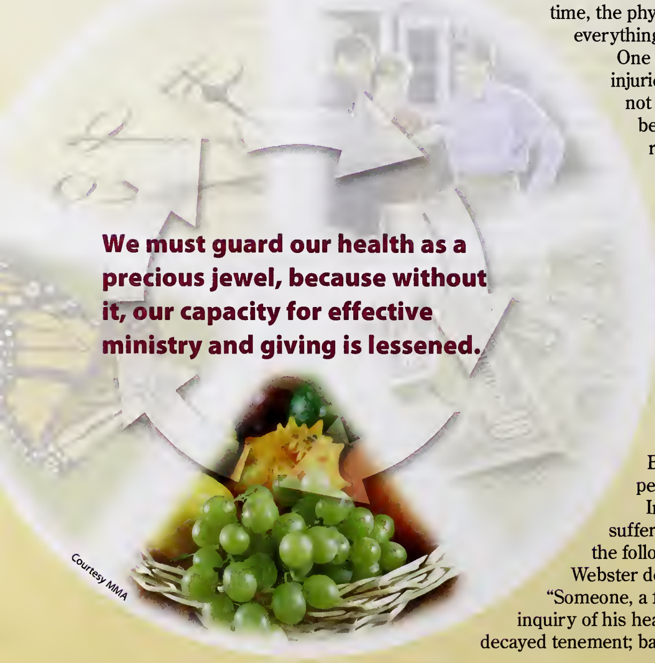
Six months after my wedding, my new wife and several of her close relatives were in a tragic car accident. Her father was killed instantly, and Nancy, next to him in the front seat, was hospitalized with major head trauma, severe facial injuries, broken ribs and punctured lungs. She was rushed to the hospital in South Bend, Ind., where we spent a frantic and horrific six weeks.

My wife's most profound loss was her memory. Nancy did not know me for about three weeks. Her memory was wiped out for a significant period of time, and she had to learn who I was all over again. As a result, we spent an intense, often emotional rebuilding period. For a long time, the physical and emotional injuries overshadowed everything and colored our world gray.

One significant thing God taught me as a result of her injuries (and her lengthy but complete recovery) was not to take health for granted. Many of us tend to believe the strength and resilience of our youth is a right we will possess forever. But the truth is we are vulnerable to illnesses, accidents, and physical and mental frailty, all the more as we age, bringing us face to face with our stewardship of a precious gift given to us from God: health.

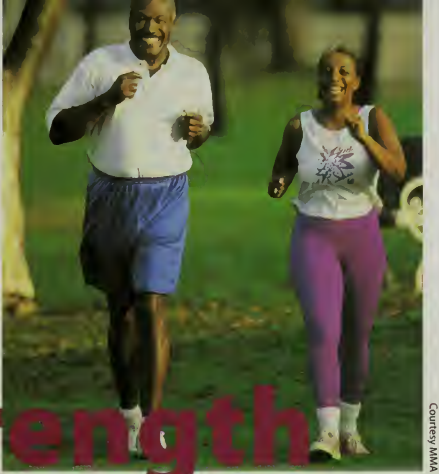
The Bible states in poetic terms God's perspective of our physical bodies: "We have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and does not come from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). The Scripture paints our health as frail and fleeting, and our bodies as temporary. We are not superheroes; leaping tall buildings and racing speeding bullets is not our right at any age. The Bible says "the days of our life are 70 years, or perhaps 80, if we are strong" (Psalm 90:10).

In 1846, former president John Quincy Adams suffered a stroke. Although he returned to Congress the following year, his health was clearly failing. Daniel Webster described his last meeting with Adams: "Someone, a friend of his, came in and made particular inquiry of his health. Adams answered, 'I inhabit a weak, frail, decayed tenement; battered by the winds and broken in upon by the



We must guard our health as a precious jewel, because without it, our capacity for effective ministry and giving is lessened.

Courtesy MMA



Courtesy MMA

gift of strength

storms, and from all I can learn, the landlord does not intend to repair.'"

Our bodies are meant to be replaced when we finally see Jesus. Until then we will live with weakness and illness. If we don't watch with care over the gift of our health, we may not be able to maximize other gifts we have. The scope and frequency of our ability to be good stewards of our other gifts is affected as health declines. Though many people with physical problems maintain productive lives, it takes more effort. We must guard our health as a precious jewel, because without it, our capacity for effective ministry and giving is lessened.

As believers we must understand that proper stewardship of our health and well-being means that we treat our bodies with respect and with their design in mind. The worship of the church can help deepen our knowledge of physical and mental care. Congregations can play a more active role in helping us stay healthy, helping us use our resources wisely and responsibly in the pursuit of good health and help us see how ill-health impacts others. This can be taught to all ages and addressed with the particular needs of each age group in mind.

The care of our bodies is not motivated by a fear of dying but by good stewardship of limited life. Because we teach and preach a biblical worldview, the church can face the issue of mortality from a more balanced perspective. Rather than avoiding death, the church can advocate embracing life, both here and in God's new creation someday. Instead of fearing what is lost as we grow older, believers should seek to appreciate the unique gifts that each season of life brings. Instead of trying to remain young, we can communicate that aging should be accepted in wisdom and community.

For a long time, the church at large has remained strangely silent on issues of health. We seem embarrassed by the mention of bodies or sickness, as if that instruction were somehow not as spiritual as preaching on the inner life. But MMA, the stewardship agency of Mennonite Church USA, is helping churches bring a biblical perspective to bear on health issues. For example, MMA's Stewardship University offers health classes and seminars on a variety of topics, such as healthy foods, diet comparison, exercise as spiritual discipline, stress management and aging issues. The hope is to foster better and longer periods of maximized health for church members, which in turn promotes better stewardship of all other gifts and resources.

The church can also encourage improved stewardship by not neglecting practical health issues, such as scheduling blood pressure screenings, promoting immunizations and discussing mental health and other related issues regularly.

As a community of faith, we must help each other rejoice in the gift of life, while also providing accountability, forgiveness and healing when our lives sometimes seem broken.

A study conducted by sociologists at Purdue University (*Spokesman Review*, October 1992) verified that 4 percent of those who regularly went to church reported poor health, compared with 9 percent of those who did not attend a house of worship. Why the difference? It has been shown that freedom from guilt, worry and fear has an enormous positive consequence on health. As a com-

Continued on page 17

Correction: In the Jan. 10 issue, page 15, line 7, the word "hustlers" should be "hostlers."

Wide open until you see God, *then brake*

A racing analogy can help Christians and congregations reflect on our approach to faith and action.

by Sharon K. Williams and David Wolfe

Wide open … till you see God. Dave saw it a few years ago on a T-shirt at a gathering of sports car enthusiasts. One day, while mowing the lawn, he wondered what this T-shirt theology means for us who follow Jesus. Then he tested it as a devotional for a men's prayer breakfast at his church.

"There must be a zillion scriptures that would support that image," Sharon said.

"Absolutely," Dave said, "like, 'You shall love your God with all your heart, soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself.' And I guess the braking part happens when we get to heaven. Then we can brake."

What does it mean to live wide open until we see God? We may come close to it in a few moments of passionate commitment. Or desperation. Can we, with our human limitations and inhibitions, even hope to live this in any sustainable way?

The challenge. It involves being willing to take risks, to focus on the goal and drive away from all distractions and easy ways out.

That is the challenge. It involves being willing to take risks, to focus on the goal and drive away from all distractions and easy ways out.

The race car driver's sole passion is to complete the course as quickly as possible—wide open, foot to the floor, pedal to the metal. Lap times are measured in thousandths of a second. How will our Christian lives be measured? Would that we could live so passionately for the purposes of God.

Then brake. Later, we contemplated the purpose of braking. It's in the curves. The racecar driver must not hesitate but accelerate. Going fast is easy on the straightaway. The secret to a fast lap is being smooth through the turns. The driver brakes at the last moment, slowing the car, downshifting and steering into the turn. Just after reaching the turn's apex, the driver is full on the gas and wide open until the next turn.

You don't have to drive a racecar to enjoy this thrill on a smaller scale. Here on the East Coast, many of us encounter winding back roads in our everyday travels. When your car works well and you know the road, you can exceed the speed limit and know just the amount of braking needed to gracefully take the curves. Long straight roads are, well, boring.

Other sports, such as horseback riding, also utilize this wide open and braking phenomenon. Whether doing competitive or pleasure riding, the rider and horse can experience a oneness in movement that is freeing and exhilarating. That's why it's so much fun to do it or even just watch it.

Wide open until you see God doesn't mean living in a reckless, brakeless state. Rather, it calls us to use our brakes appropriately to achieve swift, forward movement toward and with God. It gives new meaning to "there is no shadow of turning with Thee" ("Great is Thy Faithfulness"). It's living as the apostle Paul describes: "By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us—set us right with him, make us fit for him—we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. And that's not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand—out in the wide open space of God's grace and glory, standing tall and

We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next.

shouting our praise" (Romans 5:1-5, *The Message*).

There's more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. On the contrary, we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit.

So what kind of driver are you as it pertains to your Christian life? Are you pursuing a "wide open until you see God" philosophy for your life? Or are you tapping the brakes regularly, perhaps even on the straightaway?

This discipline also applies to the church. If your congregation is blessed to have even a few wide-open people, do they often experience the down drag of the rest who have a collective, heavy hand on the emergency brake? What are we missing if we are not a "wide open until we see God" kind of congregation? It could make all the difference between being a missional church or a maintenance church.

Wide open faith, wide open prayer, wide open service … until we see God. The analogies abound, and we hope they will engage your imagination, too. Brothers and sisters, start your engines.

Sharon K. Williams is a senior consultant with Design For Ministry and a worship leader at Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church in Norristown, Pa. David Wolfe is a member of the Madison Avenue Church of the Brethren in York, Pa. *©2005 Design For Ministry™*

Maximize the gift

continued from page 15

munity of faith, we must help each other rejoice in the gift of life, while also providing accountability, forgiveness and healing when our lives sometimes seem broken.

Caring for our health is a part of being a trusted steward of God's grace. One man's willingness to adapt wisely to his changing health situation is an example of this kind of wise stewardship of health. Dennis LeFevre, an MMA counselor in Hesston, Kan., made a conscious effort to have regular checkups and preventive tests as he approached age 40. When he was diagnosed with high cholesterol, Dennis worked with his doctor to find a way to improve his health. Together they decided that Dennis should try changing his diet and adding a running regimen in his busy life.

In the first six months, Dennis saw his cholesterol drop, precluding the need for medication. And as an additional benefit of his hard work, he lost about 20 pounds.

"It is a lifestyle change," Dennis acknowledges. "I know I will always need to be active. If I'm not, the cholesterol could be a problem and there may be a point in time when I can't counteract that anymore and have to take medication. It's been a positive change."

Dennis' willingness to adapt wisely to his changing health situation is an example to all of us of good stewardship. Since life is limited and health is finite, we must be the best guardians of our well-being we can be, knowing that if we are faithful, we can better serve and glorify God.

Roy E. Bronkema is a free-lance writer specializing in work for churches and Christian organizations. Roy and Nancy, his wife, reside in Niles, Mich. Next month's article will explore the holistic stewardship of time.

Associated resources

- Health-related educational materials are available at the MMA Bookstore (http://bookstore.mma-online.org).
- Look for a local MMA Stewardship University event in your area at MMA-online, under Education and resources.
- "Making your wishes known," a resource on putting your medical care wishes in writing, available at MMA-online under Insurance services.
- "The continuum of health insurance in the United States," a resource on increasing the understanding of various types of health insurance, available at MMA-online, under Insurance services.
- "The gift of health," an insert in the Summer 2005 issue of MMA's Sharing magazine, focusing on the gift of health and what it means to be a good steward of our health.—*Roy E. Bronkema*

Am I my brother's keeper?

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.—Matthew 6:12

Bill Hartwell is an ordained prison chaplain in Omaha, Neb.

Reflecting on the past 11 years of being a chaplain in prison ministry, I have discovered just how powerful God's Word is. One would think that people would have made peace with God by considering the sacrifice of his Son on the cross for our sins.

There should be no enmity within people toward God. By the wonderful fact of God's love for us, new ways of thinking should be happening. A new perspective could open our lives to great spiritual moments. We should now begin to see others through the eyes of Jesus. Others simply need to see Christians trying to practice God's principles, trying to mold our lives according to the truth in God's words.

We should now begin to see others through the eyes of Jesus. Others simply need to see Christians trying to practice God's principles, trying to mold our lives according to the truth in God's words.

Wouldn't it be great if good deeds could overwhelm all the bad ones? But the reverse seems to be happening today. We're drowning in a sea of lawlessness and rebellion. Crimes grow more and more vicious. Lawlessness can violate and destroy the most trusted relationships.

Our society just tries to manage or confine the "perpetrators." But wait a minute, what about all those men and women behind prison walls? Is there any hope for them? Once again the question comes: Am I my brother's keeper? Thanks be to God because there is good news. God's Word can make a difference even among men and women who have grown up without a clear sense of right and wrong.

In prisons, during Bible study, I introduce the Word of God. By encountering God's absolute truth, hearts and minds are awakened. They see precisely what they have been doing wrong, how they have been thinking wrong. God gains a foothold in their hearts and begins to transform them. "I was naked and you gave my clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me" (Matthew 25:36).

My heart becomes flooded with such joy when I look at all the names of inmates who accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. So numerous are the names that I can't remember the faces, but God can.

I receive letters from as far away as the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Mo., the Federal Maximum Security Prison in Waseca, Minn., the U.S. Federal Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kan., the Federal Transfer Center in Oklahoma City and as near as Tecumseh (Neb.) State Correctional Prison and Lincoln (Neb.) State Prison. On average I receive four to five letters per week. I answer them all by postcards mailed to me by relatives from out of state. These postcards allow the inmates to see outside while inside.

Paul said, "Let no despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

I am often asked, "How do you handle what must be a really difficult job?" I answer that God keeps me supplied with a daily diet of his love and strength to feed my faith. I have learned to place the sins of the inmates on the shoulders of God, who has all the answers to any problems. I don't judge those to whom I minister; I am compelled to love as Jesus did. Yes, Jesus hates our sins but loves the sinner.

Am I my brother's keeper? My answer is no. I am my brother's brother.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Thank you for zebra mussels, Asian ladybugs and sharing?**—Arthur Paul Boers
- **Chattering monkeys, trembling hands and loving embraces**—Anita Cleeton Greening
- **The first Christmas song**—Jan Johnson

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Massive survey to study MC USA beliefs

Church Member Profile 2006 follows research conducted in 1972 and 1989.

Mennonite Church USA has begun a two-year study of members from 120 congregations; it is called Church Member Profile 2006. The study, which will also evaluate two other Anabaptist denominations—Church of the Brethren and Brethren in Christ—will serve as a follow-up to surveys done in 1972 and 1989.

The primary goal is to collect data on church members' beliefs and opinions and whether or how they have changed since 1972 and 1989. Those leading the study also hope to gain insight into Mennonite Church USA's increasing number of racial-ethnic members and congregations.

Conrad L. Kanagy, associate professor of sociology at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College and an ordained minister in Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference, will direct the study of Mennonite Church USA congregations. The Young Center of Elizabethtown College will conduct the survey, and Donald B. Kraybill will serve as senior project director. Carl Bowman will direct the study for the Church of the Brethren.

"We can use this to capture 35 years of change," Kanagy says. "A lot has happened since that last survey in 1989; this study will give us a sense of where people are as well as where we are going as a church. This is a significant opportunity to get a picture of the church."

By evaluating how members' opinions have changed since 1972, Kanagy said churchwide leaders—ranging from the executive director to conference ministers and congregational pastors—will be able to examine what the denomination's future will or should look like. The study's findings will be presented at San Jose 2007, and at least one book may be written on the data collected.

The questionnaire for Church Member Profile 2006 was created after consultation with more than 100 people across the denomination including scholars, conference ministers, agency leaders and pastors. It includes questions about each respondent's faith story, devotional practices, religious beliefs, family life and background, congregational involvement, evangelism, political views and more. Questions from previous surveys also will be included.

More than 3,000 members from 120 congregations will receive the questionnaire in mid-February. The sample was randomly selected from congregational membership lists, and between 15 and 30 people were chosen from each congregation, depending on its size. The study includes congregations of various sizes and from each of Mennonite Church USA's 21 area conferences.

The project includes an intentional effort to survey members of Mennonite Church USA's racial-ethnic congregations. They represent 18 percent of the denomination's congregations, and members have been underrepresented in previous surveys.

"Some of the largest and most rapidly growing congregations in Mennonite Church USA are the racial-ethnic congregations," Kanagy says. "Yet knowledge about our brothers and sisters in these congregations is often fairly limited."

Kanagy is hopeful the study's results will enable the denomination to understand and hear the stories of God's work among those congregations as well as "bring about forums for developing new conversations and strengthening relationships across racial-ethnic boundaries that remain in the church."

"My prayer is that the responses of members to this survey will help provide clarity and direction for pastors, congregations, area conferences and agencies who are discerning God's plans and purposes in this new century. I trust that God's Spirit will use this project to provide new insights, sharpen our sense of identity and motivate each of us to do our part as we move toward the fulfillment of God's reign," Kanagy says.

Nearly 35 years ago, Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder opened a new window of understanding into Mennonite faith and practice through their survey of members in five Anabaptist denominations. Conducted in 1972, their study was entitled Church Member Profile I. Along with Leo Driedger, they repeated the study in 1989. Major findings of both projects were published by Herald Press as *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Denominations* (1975) and *The Mennonite Mosaic: Identity and Modernization* (1991).*—Mennonite Church USA*

A lot has happened since that last survey in 1989; this study will give us a sense of where people are as well as where we are going as a church.
—Conrad Kanagy

What's changed since 1972?

Changes among North American Mennonites since 1972, the date of the first Church Member Profile, include the integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church to create Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. About 25 percent of current Mennonite Church USA congregations joined or have been founded since 1972, and other congregations have left Mennonite Church USA since its formation. Generational change is another significant factor. Some respondents who were part of the earlier surveys are deceased and have been replaced by their children and grandchildren. For example, Baby boomers who answered the first Church Member Profile Survey in 1972 are now approaching or entering retirement. The fastest growing part of Mennonite Church USA is racial-ethnic congregations. It's a population that for the most part has joined the denomination since 1972. Racial/ethnic congregations now represent about 18 percent of all Mennonite Church USA congregations. ***—Mennonite Church USA***

ABC-TV airs mental health program

Response overwhelms staff at Mennonite Media in Harrisonburg, Va.

Wayne Gehman

Lois Hertzler responds to callers at Mennonite Media after releases of the *Shadow Voices: Finding Hope in Mental Illness* documentary on ABC-TV.

John Clark, 49, has been homeless, without a vehicle at times, without adequate funds and often hospitalized with bipolar disorder and chemical sensitivities following an on-the-job injury in 1989. On New Year's Day, he watched Mennonite Mission Network's *Shadow Voices: Finding Hope in Mental Illness* documentary on ABC-TV.

Clark could relate. He ordered a copy of the program and then wrote a follow-up letter.

"Like all the mental-health problems mentioned," Clark said, "and the people shown on your program, my disability problems are debilitating and frustrating as well."

He wants to learn more from the video so he can advocate for people with mental-health impacts and disabilities.

To date, more than 800 viewers (and some respondents who have only heard of the program by word of mouth or on the Internet) have been moved enough by the Mennonite Media-produced program to order a DVD or VHS copy for themselves. Almost 150 have posted their own story on the program's Web site, www.ShadowVoices.com.

Hundreds more (not tabulated) called Mennonite Media's toll-free number just to talk or get information. Staff members answered phone calls live at the close of most of the releases—including New Year's Day and many Sundays—so that people might connect with a real person when they call.

After viewing *Shadow Voices* (aired at various times at the discretion of local stations), many callers wanted to talk at length and tell their stories. Some broke down, such as one woman who said, "This is the first time I've ever talked to someone about my illness."

At the program's Web site, a man named Gary responded to another woman who had written about her depression and just "waiting to die." The woman responded to Gary, thanking him for his encouragement, which he in turn shared with Mennonite Media.

A woman in New York state found out about the program online, emailed a note and then phoned. She desperately wanted to find a Mennonite church in her area, about an hour north of Manhattan. Staff members sent her information about the closest churches in Pennsylvania.

"I want to thank you for reaching out to families in this way," she said repeatedly.

A man named Ross emailed saying: "I can't really remember the last time I said thank you to someone. I'm bipolar and tried suicide five years ago. I saw your TV special [and] for the first time, I smiled and cried. Finally someone knows what I feel like, and I know it's not just me. It is such a taboo subject, and my friends, very few now, dare not even bring it up."

Burton Buller, director of Mennonite Media, says the response was gratifying, especially "after a year of intensive work, to have over 70 percent of ABC local stations air the program for free and viewers responding like John Clark."

Clark compares his injury to the same type that an unsupervised child might incur by inhaling toxicants from paint cans or aerosols, causing brain injury or death. Living in an Illinois-run apartment for senior citizens and the disabled, and living on a monthly disability payment, Clark said he is adjusting to living slowly in a world set to warp 10.

"It has been a slow and painful journey of discovery, discouragement and depression, but also filled with hope, abilities, vision, potential, continuing hard work—blood, sweat and tears," Clark said.

"I live an austere, close-to-poverty lifestyle, as many mental health and disability-impacted people do. I have gone hungry many times, at one point growing and eating snails [when he lived in a warmer climate] for protein."

Now he grows a garden to help provide food for the Rockford (Ill.) Rescue Mission and works at a variety of hobbies, including some level of proficiency on seven musical instruments.

Callers wanting to connect with professional help or support groups were referred to National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) at 888-999-6264, a national advocacy group that consulted with Mennonite Media throughout the production of the documentary.—*Melodie Davis of Mennonite Mission Network*

Correction: Mennonite Publishing Network raised about $85,000 by the end of November 2005 for new Sunday school curriculum development. The amount reported in a Dec. 20, 2005, article was incorrect.

Burkholders minister to Katrina victims

Eastern Mennonite Missions workers connect with Asian communities.

As soon as he learned of the ravages of Hurricane Katrina, Leonard Burkholder wanted to go south. Through his Eastern Mennonite Missions work with the Asian community in northern U.S. cities, he had numerous connections to the hard-hit Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian communities clustered in the low-lying areas of the Gulf Coast. Burkholder serves as EMM field staff for language group churches, based in EMM's offices in Salunga, Pa.

Burkholder proposed a sabbatical that would take him south with time to reach out to Asians affected by the disaster. His EMM administrators scratched the sabbatical plans, but blessed his move to work in Alabama and Mississippi at the invitation of Good News Fellowship (GNF), an EMM partner conference.

From mid-October 2005 through January, Burkholder and his wife, Anna Mary, lived in an apartment owned by a member of Way of Life Community Fellowship, a GNF church in Mobile, Ala., and connected with local Asian communities.

"The devastation is absolutely shocking and indescribable," Burkholder says. "And in the midst of the wider disaster, the Vietnamese are a forgotten community. Many are desperately poor. Some were brought over illegally to work in the shrimping industry and cannot access federal assistance, [which] is, of course, limited."

He cited the example of numerous landed fishing boats. The cost for transporting the huge vessels four to five blocks back to the sea is rumored to be $60,000 plus—a cost that is not covered by federal funding.

As the Burkholders networked with local Asian churches and communities, they focused their efforts in Bayou La Batre, a fishing village 30 miles south of Mobile. Katrina's storm surge in Bayou La Batre reached 12 to 13 feet. In the town of 6,000, one third of the people are Asian, mostly Vietnamese.

The Burkholders put a lot of energy into planning a special Christmas and New Year's celebration for the local Asian community.

"Our purpose is to introduce Jesus Christ as the healer," Leonard says. "There is a spirit of discouragement and depression within the community here. Our hope and prayer is that by lifting Jesus up, he will break strongholds and draw people to himself."

During the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, a team of 19 from the Vietnamese American Mennonite Church of Delaware went south to assist with work projects and the celebration. They split into three groups. While one group rebuilt a house that had had water up to the ceiling, another group set up for the celebration, and another produced nearly 500 egg rolls, mounds of noodles and other New Year's delicacies for the more than 50 guests who showed up each evening.

Leonard Burkholder

Lam Nguyen, a member of a group from Delaware, deep-fried some of the 500 egg rolls outside the Way of Life Community Church in Mobile, Ala.

After the celebration, which included lively music and an evangelistic message, the ministry team received 23 response cards from guests who indicated that they wanted to learn more about God.

In the weeks following the celebration, Leonard and Anna Mary visited the homes of people who had filled out response cards. They also offered gifts of the *Jesus* film on DVD in several Vietnamese languages.

Burkholder says he is hoping and praying that a Vietnamese pastor will be able to continue following up the relationships they've been able to establish during their southern sojourn.

"Although I'm not officially on sabbatical, I've enjoyed the change of pace that allows me to focus on evangelism and the initial steps of a possible church plant," Burkholder says.

Bayou La Batre has three Buddhist temples but no evangelical Vietnamese church. Regardless of whether their work results in an actual church plant, Burkholder says their time in the South has helped strengthen ties with GNF and create goodwill within the Asian community.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

The Vietnamese are a forgotten community. Many are desperately poor.
—Leonard Burkholder

Leaders are reminded to rest and pray

Eastern Mennonite Seminary event focuses on spiritual disciplines.

Jim Bishop

School for Leadership Training speaker Duane Beck stresses the need for practicing spiritual disciplines as a vehicle for transformation in pastoral ministry.

It sounds so obvious and necessary, but it is so difficult to achieve. The need to spend regular time in contemplation, reflection, rest and communing with God amid busy schedules was underscored repeatedly at the annual School for Leadership Training held Jan. 16-19 at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

Some 250 pastors, lay leaders and seminary students attended corporate sessions and classes around the theme, "Embodying God's Wholeness in a Frenzied World," based on texts from the Gospel of John.

In three messages, principal speaker Duane Beck, pastor of Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church, reflected on differences between "being busy and being fruitful" in pastoral ministry.

Beck, former lead pastor of Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind., for 21 years, opened each session with corporate "stretching exercises" aimed at helping participants reach toward and bless God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit and bring fresh awareness of their empowering presence.

"What do we do when things become frantic in our lives?" Beck asked. "Those things that can help us change for the better—quiet reflection, contemplation and communion with God—fall by the wayside."

Beck stressed the need for people to undergo "pruning processes" in order to become more productive and fruitful, noting that "the more we deal with the unredeemed areas of our lives the more we can experience God's healing and grace in our lives."

Beck quoted author Leslie Newbigin: "The minister's leadership of the congregation in its mission to the world will be first and foremost in the area of his or her own discipleship, in that life of prayer and daily consecration … is the place where the essential battles are either won or lost."

"Pay attention to [what's happening] in your daily lives," he advised. "Let your bodies catch up with your souls in order to embody God. Our inner lives need to dwell where Jesus dwells. Staying near God's heart shapes and transforms us as ministers. Go back to your baptismal call and receive it anew. Know that God loves you and reflect on the awareness that 'you are my beloved child.'"

Beck recommended developing a personal call and mission statement as a framework for regular spiritual disciplines that include meditation on Scripture, prayer and a regular period of retreat and acquiring a spiritual director or mentor.

Judy Zook, pastor of New Holland (Pa.) Mennonite Church, affirmed the conference emphasis on "abiding in Jesus," noting that ministry flows from establishing boundaries of quiet space with God that empowers pastors to live in a frenzied world with the peace and joy of God's holy presence in their lives.

"I was renewed and energized," said Sam Thomas, pastor of Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church, "to continue being an ambassador of the gospel of Christ by the profound reminder that in my baptism, God's Spirit came upon me and I was named God's beloved. Renewed in God's love for me, I've been renewed to embody that love to others."—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University*

Jim Bishop

MLK Day Celebration

Martin Luther King Jr.'s primary message "was more about repentance and reconciliation than about a dream," declared Cheryl Sanders, senior pastor of the Third Street Church of God in Washington and professor of Christian ethics at Howard University School of Divinity. We begin at the wrong place—with [King's] dream rather than with his call to repent and be reconciled to God and each other, said Sanders on Jan. 16 at the opening session of the annual School for Leadership Training at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University*

MC Canada looks at membership issues

Some congregations want to be active in provincial body, not national church.

In the spring of 2004, Mennonite Church British Columbia (MCBC) began a discernment process regarding the desire of some congregations to be provincially active only. And a five-year agreement between MCBC and Mennonite Church Canada to offer provincially active only status on a trial basis will expire in 2006.

MC Canada's General Board has given this issue top priority for its newly formed Faith and Life Committee. The group is working to have a recommendation available for testing by delegates at Edmonton 2006—the next time representatives from congregations across Canada will meet.

Rudy Baergen, chair of the Faith and Life Committee and pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, wants to apply theological rigor to the question. Baergen is keenly aware of the need for congregations to be and feel heard.

"We need to respect congregations that challenge the wider church," Baergen says.

One of the screens the committee will apply to the discernment process will be to identify parallels between congregational and wider church membership. For example, members of the same congregation may not all agree on everything but can still be in communion with one another.

But even the word membership has baggage, says Lorin Bergen, pastor at Living Hope, Surrey, B.C., a congregation with a membership predominantly under age 50.

"With that demographic," says Bergen. "we have clearly seen a hesitancy to become a member on paper of the church. There is a question of Why is membership important? I am coming here; I am putting myself under the authority and accountability of the church; I'm going to a small group regularly, I am ministering and using my gifts. … We've got people who aren't members who are more committed than members. We're seeing a move away from official membership."

George Hoeppner, pastor at First Mennonite Church Greendale, Chilliwack, B.C., concurs with Bergen. He says that while some older members in his congregation lament the loss of being connected to a wider church body, "the younger generation is not tied to anything as far as denomination goes."

Practical reasons for belonging to a wider church body at the denominational level include considerations such as benefits (e.g., pension plan) for pastors and congregational staff, teaching resources, Sunday school curriculum and opportunities to engage in international ministries. But the younger demographic is more likely to research and use supports from a wide range of sources outside the denomination—easy to do in the Internet information age.

Rudy Baergen

Although such thinking can help broaden perspectives beyond the Mennonite body, Baergen says, there can be risks.

"I've seen that in Colombia," says Baergen, "[where] independent churches run into serious difficulties because they are drinking from so many different wells they get this total mixture of theological understandings within their congregation, and when they develop a problem or crisis it's really difficult to resolve because you're just not unified in anything and you don't have any common ground to stand on."

Baergen says the discernment of a wider body offers some comfort. "If we can develop a sense of trust with one another in the wider church, then perhaps we don't need to feel as though every congregation needs to wrestle alone with every issue that comes along. The question is, Are we better off to work at this as part of a larger body?"

Indeed, there is doubt about the trust issue. Lorin Bergen says the homosexuality issue is a symptom of deeper disillusionment with the denomination and its polity.

"There is an incredible lack of trust in leadership and a real dissatisfaction with the polity that we have in MC Canada," he says. "We find it fairly alarming that our MC Canada leaders can't approach a church—using the example in Ontario—about a clear break in our confession of faith because that would be stepping on the toes of Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada, and people would be saying … 'I just can't understand that.'"

There is an incredible lack of trust in leadership and a real dissatisfaction with the polity that we have in MC Canada. —Lorin Bergen

Baergen acknowledges the accountability and authority issue—and how wearisome it must get for a handful of congregations to be the little fish swimming upstream in a big river. On the other hand, he says, "If we disagree on something, we need to hang in there and keep on insisting that this is wrong, we don't agree, why are we doing it this way? That's the accountable thing to do."

A significant part of the committee's work will be studying and discerning what Scripture says about followers belonging to a wider discerning community of believers. There is some biblical evidence to support the notion of being one body and holding on to unity, if not official membership, says Baergen.

It's hard and sometimes painful work, whether churches leave the wider communion or commit to stay with a long view of working at disagreements. Finding respectful ways of dealing with both circumstances is another part of the challenge.—*Dan Dyck for Mennonite Church Canada*

Bethel College remembers King visit

Former board chair remembers animosity in the Newton, Kan., community.

After 46 years and waves of history to wade through, it's hard to remember details of Martin Luther King Jr.'s visit to Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., on Jan. 21, 1960. Nevertheless, people who were there say he left an indelible impression. Many had their memories stirred when Mark McCormick, a columnist for the *Wichita Eagle*, wrote about King's visit to Bethel in his column on Jan. 15—King's birthday.

Blanche Spaulding of North Newton is the widow of former economics professor J. Lloyd Spaulding. Spaulding chaired the committee that planned the Memorial Hall Series that brought King to Bethel.

"Lloyd was an enthusiastic supporter and follower of Dr. King's work," Spaulding says. Since those were the early days of the civil rights movement in the United States, and since King was not yet widely known, she thinks it was probably her husband's personal interest in King that helped put him on the Memorial Hall Series roster.

> [Martin Luther King Jr.] stressed the importance of love and nonviolence in the future of the Negro movement toward equality and justice. —Bethel College yearbook

Like many of those who remember being at the faculty and board dinner for King the evening of Jan. 21, 1960, and his speech following, Spaulding recalls few details.

"It was an occasion," she says. " It was one of the high points of our time at Bethel."

John O. Schrag, North Newton, was chair of the Bethel College board at the time. He and his wife, Esther, sat on either side of King at the dinner, held in the basement of Memorial Hall, which was then the dining hall.

"I have vivid memories of having that access to him" Schrag says. "I'd forgotten how much animosity there was" in the wider community toward King.

"I remember the enthusiasm at Bethel [for his coming] but also the question: What will happen?" says Spaulding.

By all accounts the event went smoothly.

Vada Snider

A gospel choir made up of community members and Bethel College students sang as part of the college's annual celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday (left to right): Keith Hiebner, Kiara Sterling (front), Morgan McCray, Bridget Kratzer, Chelsea Hahn and Sara Dick.

According to the 1960 Bethel College yearbook, King's "forceful lecture, in which he stressed the importance of love and nonviolence in the future of the Negro movement toward equality and justice, was well received by a full house in Memorial Hall."—*Melanie Zuercher of Bethel College*

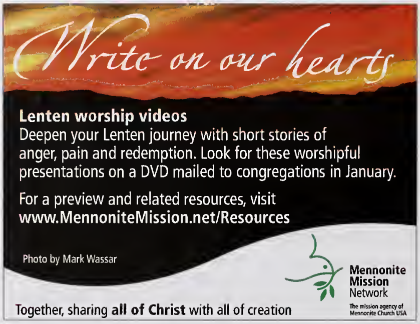


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Photo by Mark Wassar

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CALENDAR

A reunion of all missionaries who have served in Japan under Mennonite and related mission boards is being held at **Camp Mack**, Milford, Ind., May 17-19. Call 574-534-1783 for further information.

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, ***27th Annual Lancaster Family History Conference for Genealogists and Family Historians***, March 31-April 1, Lancaster, Pa. For more information, contact 717-393-9745 or lmhs@lmhs.org. Visit online at www.lmhs.org.

WORKERS

Brubaker, Shirley Yoder, was installed Jan. 8 as interim pastor at Carpenter Park Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa.

Jantzi, Beryl, ended Dec. 31, 2005, as pastor at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church. He began with Mennonite Mutual Aid in January.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Geiser, Jethro David, Sept. 20, 2005, to Olin and Karen Gerber Geiser, Dalton, Ohio.

Helmuth, Emma Palida, Nov. 7, 2004, recieved for adoption Jan. 10, by Todd and Rebecca Helmuth, New Paris, Ind.

Helmuth, Sienna Rose, Dec. 22, 2005, to Todd and Lisa Mullett Helmuth, Sarasota, Fla.

Hicks, Gracyn Taphena, Dec. 23, 2005, to Tommy and Shawny Nelsen Hicks, Dorchester, Neb.

King, Caleb Edward, Dec. 5, 2005, to Jim and Angel Fessler King, Bellefontaine, Ohio.

Maury, Mikayla Joy, Dec. 28, 2005, to Doug and Elizabeth Heatwole Maury, Hesston, Kan.

Morris, Regan Olivia, Jan. 19, to Steve and Sharon Faul Morris, Hutchinson, Kan.

Roth, Gannon Heiland, Nov. 9, 2005, to Landon and Alicia Heiland Roth, Kansas City, Kan.

Schrag, Ava Joleen, Nov. 6, 2005, to Myles Schrag and Shelley Smithson, Urbana, Ill.

Shelly, Brandt Victor, Jan. 18, to Jason and Renita Bergey Shelly, Telford, Pa.

Steiner, Isaac Ray, Jan. 23, to Rob and Sarah Burkholder Steiner, Goshen, Ind.

Stoltzfus, Shania Noel, Dec. 25, 2005, to Daryl and Kimberly Stoltzfus, Gap, Pa.

Yoder, Caitlyn Elizabeth, Oct. 16, 2005, to Justin and Corrie Gardner Yoder, Orrville, Ohio.

Yordy, Luke Jonathan, Dec. 28, 2005, to Eric and Kristy Shellenberger Yordy, Goshen, Ind.

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MARRIAGES

Abdul/Willer: Jonathan Abdul, Hartville, Ohio, and Alana Willer, Canal Fulton, Ohio, Jan. 7 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Fransen/Weidner: Kay Fransen, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Mark Weidner, Cincinnati, Jan. 14 at Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship.

Gerber/Stice: Sonya Gerber, Kidron, Ohio, and Nicholas Stice, Westville, Okla., Nov. 19, 2005, at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron.

Gingrich/Wenden: Michelle Gingrich, Mountville, Pa., and Chris Wenden, Sydney, Australia, Jan. 14 at Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Graves/Spaulding: Brian Graves, Auburn, Ind., and Heidi Spaulding, Auburn, Sept. 17, 2005, at Maplewood Mennonite Church, Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Keene/Walker: Debbie Keene, Columbus, Ohio, and Christopher Walker, Dayton, Ohio, Oct. 15, 2005, at Columbus Mennonite Church.

Longenecker/Webel: Christopher Longenecker, Bellefontaine, Ohio, and Allison Webel, Youngstown, Ohio, Dec. 3, 2005, at Columbus (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Mereness/Schrock: Ann Mereness, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Jeff Schrock, Wakarusa, Ind., Nov. 12, 2005, at Columbus (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Monzon Paz/Stoltzfus: Marco Monzon Paz, San Marcos La Laguna, Guatemala, and Jessi Stoltzfus, Lakewood, Colo., Dec. 3, 2005, in San Marcos La Laguna.

Paulson/Schmell: Robert Simeon Paulson, Cassopolis, Mich., and Rebekah Lee Schmell, Ft. Wayne, Ind., Dec. 30, 2005, at Maplewood Mennonite Church, Ft. Wayne.

DEATHS

Amstutz, Sidney, 64, Elkhart, Ind., died Jan. 1 of a heart attack. Parents: Rufus and Clara Amstutz. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Bucher, Mildred L., 78, Salunga, Pa., died Dec. 9, 2005, of Parkinson's. Spouse: John C. Bucher. Parents: Harvey and Susan Alderfer. Children: John Paul, Kenneth, Ruth Mellinger, Nancy Rotfort; 12 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12, 2005, at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa.

Buller, Harold W., 83, Beatrice, Neb., died Jan. 4. Spouse; Anne Wiebe Buller. Parents: Peter J. and Anna Wiens Bulller. Children: Paul, Glenn, Mary Ann Triller; four grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 7 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Chaika, Sylvia I., 74, Robbinsdale, Minn., died Jan. 5. Spouse: Kenneth Chaika (deceased). Parents: Henry M. and Aganetha Harder. Children: Cynthia Roberts, Kenny; one grandchild; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

FOR THE RECORD

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Claassen, Marie M. Jantzen, 99, Salina, Kan., died Jan. 4. Spouse: John P. Claassen (deceased). Parents: Cornelius and Anna Ensz Jantzen. Children: Doris Locke, Ellen Berger, Judith Goertzen; seven grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 9 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Esh, Virginia May Smucker, 84, Columbus, Ohio, died Dec. 22, 2005. Parents: Clarence and Clara Martin Smucker. Children: Samuel, Ellen Wiseman, Steven; five grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 2 at Columbus Mennonite Church.

Jackson, Joyce B., 70, Wellsville, N.Y., died Nov. 10, 2005. Spouse: Millard U. Jackson. Parents: James and Flossie S. Brownell. Children: Richard, Denis, Suzanne Mix, Andrew; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at Yorks Corners Mennonite Church, Wellsville.

Keyser, Alma Koffel, 85, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 19, 2005. Parents: Nathan and Anna Mary Keyser. Funeral: Nov. 22, 2005, at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

King, Floyd Robert, 72, Belleville, Pa., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Orpha Stoltzfus King. Parents: Cletus and Mary Leah Yoder King. Children: Floyd Robert Jr., Judith Ellen Bender; four grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa.

Kirkton, Hugh Max, 83, Chenoa, Ill., died Jan. 10. Spouse: June Oyer Kirkton. Parents: Hugh and Jeannetta Drury Kirkton. Children: Sharon Hughes, James, Dean, Rick; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa.

Krauter, Vesta May Lowenberg, 84, Donnellson, Iowa, died Jan. 3 due to complications from pneumonia. Spouse: Christian Frederick Krauter (deceased). Parents: Edward J. and Lydia R. Handrich Lowenberg. Children: Edward, Kristi Keller, Stephen, Donna Vogel; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson.

Kraybill, Orpha E., 95, Lancaster, Pa., died Jan. 7. Spouse: Norman R. Kraybill (deceased). Parents: David and Minnie Witmer Erb. Children: Harold, Helen Miller, Herbert; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Elizabethtown (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Landis, Howard D., 64, Lebanon, Ore., died Dec. 18, 2005. Spouse: Joan Landis. Parents: Louis and Ruth Landis. Children: Becky Savage, Amy Dannen, Kevin; six grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 21, 2005, at Lebanon Mennonite Church.

Landis, I. Marvin, 90, Lancaster, Pa., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Anna Mae Landis. Parents: Phares B. and Martha Landis Groff. Funeral: Jan. 19 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola.

Landis, Ruth Shank, 90, Albany, Ore., died Jan. 6. Spouse: Louis Landis (deceased). Parents: Eli and Esther Lapp Shank. Children: Rosalee McElmurry, Lois Justus, Esther Hofer, George; 14 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 10 in Albany.

Leatherman, Ida Mae Brunk, 89, Waynesboro, Va., died Dec. 7, 2005, of cancer. Spouse: Richard Wismer Leatherman (deceased). Parents: Samuel H. and Mollie W. Brunk. Children: Betty See, Richard; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 14, 2005, at First Mennonite Church, Richmond, Va.

Lyndaker, Leslie R., 85, Croghan, N.Y., died Jan. 19. Spouse: Vera Lehman Lyndaker. Parents: Joseph and Sarah Yousey Lyndaker. Children: Vernon, Marlin; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

Mast, Elvin, 45, Parkesburg, Pa., died Dec. 28, 2005, of multiple myeloma. Spouse: Carol J. Blank Mast. Parents: Elmer and Barbara Stoltzfus Mast. Children: Kim, Keith. Funeral: Dec. 31, 2005, at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Nissley, Vera Becker, 78, Manheim, Pa., died Nov. 10, 2005. Spouse: Clayton R. Nissley. Parents: Jacob and Mary Becker. Children: John D., Jay W., Barbara Nissley Good, Mary Ellen August; 13 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim.

Nolt, Miles O., 89, Manheim, Pa., died Oct. 31, 2005. Spouse: Irene E. Nolt. Parents: Clayton and Lizzie Nolt. Children: Fay E. Landis, Glenn E., Clair E., Dale E.; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 4 at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim.

Obold, Eleanor A. Diefenderfer, 87, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 9. Spouse: James Frederick Obold (deceased). Parents: James T. and Elise Troelsch Diefenderfer. Children: Fred, Kathryn Obold Hunsberger; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Roggie, Pearl N., 80, Croghan, N.Y., died Jan. 19. Parents: John and Anna Hersh Roggie. Funeral: Jan. 23 at Croghan Conservative Mennonite Church.

Roth, Clarence Daniel, 88, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 7. Spouse: Marjorie Roth. Parents: Enos and Fannie Roth. Children: Joyce, Lonnie; four grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold.

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Andy Brubacher Kaethler, M.A.; May 26–June 2
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Art McPhee, Ph.D.; June 12–18
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Ropp, Ardith Hershberger, 80, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 4. Spouse: Ernie G. Ropp (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Cora Brenneman Hershberger. Children: Phil, Myron, Warren; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Rufenacht, Maynard E., 83, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 21. Spouse: (1st) Elverda Nofziger (deceased), (2nd) Bernice Nofziger. Parents: Elias and Louisa Aschliman Rufenacht. Children: Jean Hartzler, Jim, Corwin, Terry, Lonnie; 11 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 25 at West Clinton (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Rupp, Marie Flaming, 98, Westminster, Colo., died Dec. 26, 2005. Spouse: Carl H. Rupp (deceased). Parents: Peter and Aganetha Flaming. Children: Carla, Larry; three grandchildren; one great grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 1 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Snyder, Lula H., 83, Elkhart, Ind., died Jan. 14 of cancer. Spouse: William Snyder (deceased). Parents: Charles and Laura Hahn. Children: Marlene Hartman, Elaine Yoder, Duane; nine grandchildren; 18 great grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Stockton, Lorraine M., 96, West Liberty, Ohio, died Jan. 11. Spouse: John M. Stockton (deceased). Parents: James and Nellie Flynn Maley. Child: Patricia Zook; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio.

Stutzman, Lester S., 96, Milford, Neb., died Dec. 28, 2005. Spouse: Velma Stutzman. Parents: Sanford and Lizzie Khuns Stutzman. Children: Richard, Dorothy; 10 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Vercler, Wayne Weldon, 90, Washington, Ill., died Jan 14. Spouse: Edna Vercler. Parents: Christian and Susan Wagner Vercler. Child: Richard; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington.

Weaver, Dorothy Kandel, 87, Dalton, Ohio, died Jan. 4. Spouse: Ralph A. Weaver (deceased). Parents: William and Martha Hochstetler Kandel. Children: Larry, Gordon, Twila Snyder, Mary Shoup, Martha Hoover, Cheryl Wengerd, Carol Scheufler; 20 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Martins Mennonite Meeting Place, Orrville, Ohio.

Ward, Clinton Robert, 67, Lebanon, Ore., died Dec. 31, 2005. Parents: Robert and Ellamarie Baysinger Ward. Children: Donna Lorraine Curry, Kenneth, Wendy Sisko. Funeral: Jan. 9 at Lebanon Mennonite Church.

Weldy, Evelyn Elnore Kauffman, 69, Glendale, Ariz., died Jan. 11. Parents: William and Edna G. Lehman Kauffman. Children: Jonathan M., Patricia A. Murray, Glenda F. Oakley; six grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale.

Yoder, Erma Sigler, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 28, 2005. Spouse: Harold A. Yoder. Parents: D. Dallas and Montez M. Evans Zigler. Children: Miriam Kauffman, Glen; one grandchild; four step-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31, 2005 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Yoder, Stanley Emerson, 81, Sarasota, Fla., died Nov. 19, 2005, of cancer. Spouse: (1st) Anna Pauline Weaver (deceased), (2nd) Roxie Shank (deceased), (3rd) Elva Kornhaus (deceased). Parents: Earl and Barbara Allgyer Yoder. Children: Alan G., Jan. S., Virginia (Ginny) E. Wright, David B., Anne M., Nathan L.; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Memorial services: Dec. 3, 2005, at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio, and Dec. 16, 2005, at Bahai Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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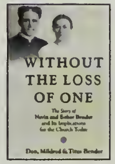

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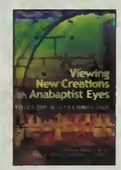

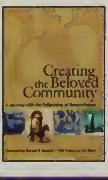

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Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania seeks a ***director of development*** to provide leadership in the areas of church and community relations, fund-raising and membership growth. Responsibilities include organization and management of a development program, donor and contact information, coordinating public relations activities and fund-raising events, building relationships with members, churches and donors. See full job description at www.mhep.org. Interested candidates should send their resumé to Sarah Heffner, Director, MHEP, PO Box 82, Harleysville, PA 19438 or sarahh@mhep.org.

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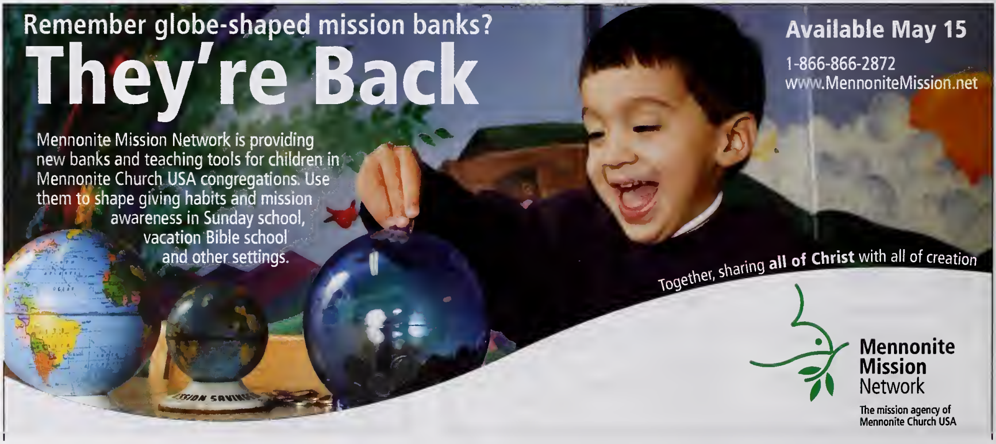

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RESOURCES

Cinéma Divinité: Religion, Theology and the Bible in Film, edited by Eric S. Christianson, Peter Francis and William R. Telford (SCM Press, 2005, $29.99), is an interdisciplinary study of theology and film. Its 17 essays consider case studies of films, filmmakers and genres and look at religion in film. For serious students.

Finding St. Paul in Film by Richard Walsh (T & T Clark, 2005, $22) finds a Paul who is a stranger to our questions and ideologies. As Paul does not appear often in film, the films the book brings into dialogue with Paul have primarily metaphorical connections with the Paul of Christian theology.

Creating the Beloved Community: A Journey with the Fellowship of Reconciliation by Paul R. Dekar (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2005, $23.95) is a history of FOR in the United States that shows FOR members have been practical dreamers, both imagining a more peaceful world and working to realize the dream.

Viewing New Creations Through Anabaptist Eyes: Ethics of Biotechnology, edited by Roman J. Miller, Beryl H. Brubaker and James C. Peterson (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2005, $23.95), investigates the promise and perils of current genetic biotechnology.

Without the Loss of One: The Story of Nevin and Esther Bender and Its Implications for the Church Today by Don, Mildred and Titus Bender (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2005, $15.95) surveys a life of ministry ranging from Greenwood, Del., to Philadelphia, Miss., and beyond and tells how Nevin and Esther found the church a place of both joy and disappointment.

Writing Peace: The Untold Stories of Great War Mennonite Objectors by Melanie Springer Mock (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2005, $23.95) analyzes and publishes the diaries of Mennonite conscientious objectors from the First World War. Historical, biographical and literary approaches reveal the significant role of these diaries in telling the story of the Mennonites and of wartime in America.

The Next Generation: Contemporary Expressions of Faith by Patricia C. Pongracz and Wayne Roosa (Eerdmans, 2005, $60) features the work of 44 North American artists in media ranging from painting and sculpture to photography and mixed-media collage, showing the creative breadth of present-day art inspired by the Judaeo-Christian tradition. It includes full-color reproductions of each piece.

War and Faith in Sudan by Gabriel Meyer, photographs by James Nicholls (Eerdmans, 2005, $20), is a stirring account of the tragic civil war in Sudan—as endured by the Nuba people of central Sudan. Nicholls' 44 striking photos put a human face on the tragedy of modern Sudan.

A Lifelong Apprenticeship by Cam Stuart (Kindred Productions, 2005, $6.99) is part of the Description of a Growing Disciple series. It is a guide for believers who want to explore what it means to be growing disciples in a group setting. Each session introduces one of six qualities of a growing disciple and presents spiritual disciplines for individual and group practice.

Hope of a Better Tomorrow (MCC, 2005) is a 13-minute video and DVD from Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500, www. mcc.org. Colombians tell of their lives and recount how increased U.S. military aid to Colombia adversely affects them.

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This is one of a series of conferences for Mennonite Church women in ministry, but is open to women of all faith backgrounds.

Deadline for registration is March 1, 2006.
For registration information, please visit:
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Michael A. King is pastor of Spring Mount (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

She says, “Michael, thank God you had such a strong personality, so you could survive all the wrong moves I made as an inexperienced parent.” I like the sound of that. I imagine myself back then, tough little kid standing for truth, justice and the American way when my parents got it wrong, which is what I mostly thought they did.

But even now that I’m 51, my mother catches me in her sly traps. In exactly the same tone she continues, “And thank God I was one strong mother, so I could survive all the things I shouldn’t have had to put up with.”

In those two sentences my mother captures key challenges children and parents face in our journeys with each other. She also pulls my mind toward two classic Bible texts: “Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray” (Proverbs 22:6) and, “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you” (Deuteronomy 5:16). Indeed.

But as my mother’s confession helps highlight, such verses can be used to force submission to the parent’s presumed superior insight when in fact no parent trains any child in exactly the right way—because all parents are wounded by their parents and pass wounds down. So children are often right to think they see things their parents don’t. Because children live not only within the airbrushed reality of their parents’ public lives but also in the shadows of their parents’ broken lives. Children see past parents’ PR efforts to the truth.

I find myself grateful my parents are still alive. Because finally I’m old enough to grasp this: Not only have I survived them, I owe them more than I dreamed when I was that whippersnapper seeing only what was wrong with them.

On the other hand, my conversation with my mother comes soon after my oldest daughter’s marriage, as my middle daughter neared the end of college and as my youngest daughter neared the end of high school. Suddenly my years of training children still in the nest are nearly over.

Now I’m the parent hoping what I’ve taught and modeled and wished for them, including when I had to be strong enough to survive them, has nourished them. And now I’m all too aware that the demons I confronted, defeated and endured were there all the time I raised my daughters and passed into them. I pray they’re strong enough to survive me.

Then I find myself grateful my parents are still alive. Because finally I’m old enough to grasp this: Not only have I survived them, I owe them more than I dreamed when I was that whippersnapper seeing only what was wrong with them.

Train children. Honor mother and father. Indeed. But in our training and our honoring, what rutted lifetime roads through the cliffs and valleys and badlands of our respective broken parts we travel!

Then my dad reports they have their hearts set on a snazzy PT Cruiser. So their 1990 Subaru Legacy needs an owner. My heart leaps. I don’t want a PT Cruiser. I want that Legacy; I want it as a symbol of my parents’ legacy to me.

I suppose it will wear off eventually, but even months later I still can’t shake the feeling, every time I drive the Legacy, that here at last it has all somehow come together. I drive that car where I, not my parents, need to. I use it to live my life in all its similarities with and differences from my parents. It’s up to me now to fuel it, maintain it, decide when to repair it, pass it on or junk it. But oh how they’re in it. How much I draw from feeling—in its seats, its growly Subaru engine my dad has so lovingly cared for, its surefooted four-wheel drive—all the living and feeling, the hurting and dreaming my parents have done across its many miles.

I find a paper towel squeezed behind the radiator. I can’t throw it away; my dad used it to check the oil.

In the back window is a pillow.

“What’s that doing in there?” someone asks. “It doesn’t look like you.”

“Of course it doesn’t,” I answer. “It’s my mother’s pillow. It looks like her. That’s why it has to stay there.”

Real Families is a new column that will appear monthly.

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Everett J. Thomas

Hearing voices

Some of our readers want each page in this magazine to speak a clear and unambiguous word about what Mennonite Church USA believes and then advocate only for those beliefs. This request often emerges from a yearning for the church to be less polarized.

"Many of us are longing for peace," wrote one reader who did not want her letter published. "If we can't stop talking and writing about our differences and spreading discord among the members, how in the world do we expect Jews and Muslims to get along? Just stop writing about our differences. It's not helpful."

We regularly receive counsel similar to hers. The reason relates to the role this magazine plays in Mennonite Church USA. The logic seems to be that since *The Mennonite* is the official periodical of our denomination, the only content in its pages should be those things about which we all have publicly and officially agreed.

But delegates to Charlotte 2005 adopted purposes for *The Mennonite,* and one of them is to serve as "a forum for the voices within the denomination." Since there are widely divergent beliefs and convictions in Mennonite Church USA, and since the delegates in their wisdom authorized these pages to be a forum for those voices, readers will regularly see the opinions of sisters and brothers with whom they may disagree. It seems that some readers want us to change the rules so that those with whom they disagree will not have a voice.

But that is not what it means to be church. Peace is not the absence of conflict. Lack of public disagreement does not mean we are at peace with each other. Furthermore, public and spirited disagreements need not polarize us further. Listening for a small grain of truth in what someone else says is a spiritual discipline. It also demonstrates a humility that acknowledges our own limitations and can help us agree or disagree in love.

Listening for that small grain of truth in what someone else says is also a spiritual discipline.

I discovered one such grain of truth when we published a Speaking Out last fall. John Stoner's opinion piece ("We Need a Larger Purpose," Nov. 1, 2005) was critical of Rick Warren's popular book *The Purpose-Driven Life.* It sparked many Readers Say letters that we published in November and December.

I like that book and consider it personally helpful. And I admit that I found most of Stoner's complaints excessive and his tone extreme. But in following his complex arguments, I realized that there are a few things about which Anabaptists ought be careful. I also believe that the church is stronger after focusing on the issue; Stoner did us a service by writing something so provocative.

However, any forum for the voices within Mennonite Church USA is not the same as dialogue. Rather, it is a collection of monologues. When the cumulative affect of those monologues becomes destructive, the forum purpose has reached the limits of its effectiveness. This magazine bumped up against that limit seven years ago.

In 1999, former editor J. Lorne Peachey called a halt to any more letters and articles about our emerging denomination's teaching position on homosexuality. I have continued that moratorium during the past five years. The reason: the prenatal health of our nascent denomination was so heavily stressed by the "unloving" debate that it threatened the future of our denomination even before it was born. Consequently, both supporters and critics of that teaching position must find another medium for their debate—at least until we can find a way to have "loving dialogue" in print.

We tread a fine line at *The Mennonite.* On the one hand, we provide a place for the many members of Mennonite Church USA to share their concerns regarding matters they consider important. But we limit this privilege if such sharing becomes screaming and shouting and, in our judgement, dangerous for the church.

I have heard it said that when three Mennonites gather in a room there are at least four opinions present. That's OK. We need each other's perspectives to be strong as a church; we also need a forum for hearing each other's voices.—*ejt*

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Sin is real and deadly

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Sin is real. Sin is awful, and after 28 years of pastoring, I have finally gathered enough courage to take on this enemy of peace and joy and goodness. It may not be courage as much as disgust with the mediocre living and spectacular failures of those who claim to be Christian.

In his book *The Uneasy Conscience of the Evangelical*, Ron Sider argues that Christians are not doing well in the United States. We live sin-saturated, unredeemed, unchanged lives. We tend to be more racist than the general population. Sexual disorder is rampant. We divorce as often as the general population. Our care for the poor is marginal, with the percentage of Christian giving steadily dropping since 1968. The wealthier we've become the less we have to give. Rates of spouse abuse are similar to the general population.

This is not good. God has more for us. Christ is risen. Death and the devil have been decisively defeated, and we who claim to be followers of Christ can live a more God-pleasing life in victory over sin. For the next two years, the Lord and the editor willing, my column will uncover and combat the seven deadly sins.

Sins: We are born with a predisposition to live in a way that separates us from our best selves, each other and God. David says, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5 NIV). The Bible insists that every human is infected with the virus of sin. The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective says, "Because of sin, all have fallen short of the Creator's intent, marred the image of God in which they were created, disrupted order in the world and limited their love for others (Romans 3:23)."

As with alcoholism, we live in denial about the presence and significance of sin. We more readily see sin problems in others than in ourselves. Blindness to ourselves is one form of denial.

Another form of denial today is to turn sins into virtues. "I was born with this inclination, and if God made me this way then it must be good." The biblical fact of the matter is that we are born damaged goods. Our earliest inclinations are tainted with sin. All of our inclinations, desires and actions must be evaluated in the light of God's holy revelation, not typical human behavior, because human behavior is messed up.

Deadly: A typical flippant attitude toward sin is, "Sure, we all sin. After all, we're human. What's the big deal? Everybody gets angry and blows their stack." Last year anger killed Kurt Ford, a much-loved and admired police officer in our community. Sin is deadly. Seldom are the consequences as dramatic or immediate, but unaddressed sin has serious consequences. Sin separates us from God's creation, others and God. "Because of sin, humanity has been given over to the enslaving powers of evil and death" (Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective). "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Seven: Why seven sins? Aren't there more than seven? The seven—pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, lust and gluttony—were recognized by earnest Christians in the fourth-century monastic movement as endangering our life with God. In the sixth century, Pope Gregory I named this list, and it has served the church well in helping followers of Jesus name and overcome these temptations. There is a greater power for Christians in overcoming sin and living a fulfilled, Christ-filled, purposeful life. I want us to experience that victory. I want our churches to live with uncompromised spiritual power. I want this world to know more of God's peace that comes when Jesus is Lord of all of life.

Let's throw off the sin that so easily entangles us (Hebrews 12:1). Let's pray for each other. Let's pray for our churches. Let's pray that God set us free and fill us with spiritual power and purity.

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 4, February 21, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Cover: iStockphoto

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 40033185, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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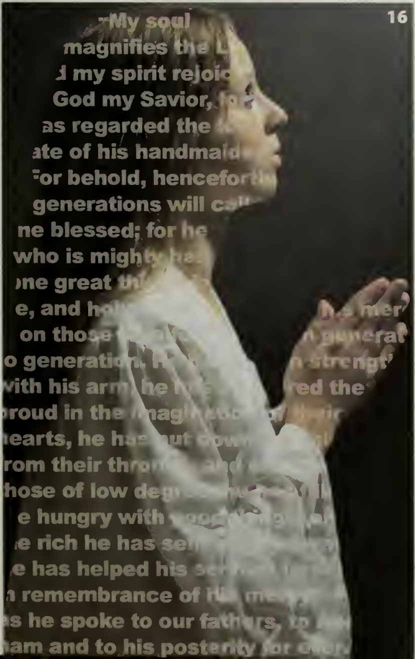
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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Mennonite education

Thanks for addressing the topic of preK-12 Anabaptist education ("What Does It Mean for a PreK-12 School to Be Mennonite-Anabaptist?" Jan. 24). While I resonate with most everything shared in the Donovan Steiner interview, as a cover story I found it lacking in depth. The question posed by the ambitious headline is an important one, deserving of more in-depth treatment. Without criticizing the content itself, it reads more like a press release than a cover article.

I would like to see *The Mennonite* take on the topic, interviewing parents, students, educators and pastors. Steiner correctly identifies pluralism as a challenge facing Mennonite schools, but it is one concern among many. As with the church itself, there is much to be celebrated and also to be scrutinized within preK-12 Mennonite-Anabaptist education.—*Bradley Kauffman, Elkhart, Ind.*

Re an idea contained in "God's Call for Mennonite Education" (Jan 24): In that article, Patrick Keifert is quoted as saying, "Transformation is being, not doing." Must we set being and doing against each other? I suppose I might say something like that if I were addressing some Pharisees. It seems paradoxical with the previous sentence in the article, "To become a transformed church we must …" do three things: get together with strangers, study Scripture together and listen for God's voice in the exchange.

I choose to see transformation as being and doing. If a worm would become a butterfly there had better be a cocoon spun in which to "bury" the old self. My experience informs me, along with the Bible, that doing is part of transformation.

When I visit those in prison, help people at the local food bank, mediate in difficult conflicts, work with Mennonite Disaster Service or go ask someone for forgiveness, I find I am being changed. As Zacchaeus experienced Jesus in his home, he found a new identity by doing what God wanted him to do (Luke 19:1-9).

I have a dream also. It is that we quit separating being and doing. They are like spaghetti. It takes both noodles and sauce. Hopefully our schools will help us not only discern God's will but yield students who are doing God's will.—*Tim Sheeler, Newville, Pa.*

Colleges owned by Mennonite Church USA?

I suggest some fine tuning for a key point in Everett J. Thomas' editorial "Presidential Leadership" (Jan. 24). The editorial says, "But colleges and universities owned by Mennonite Church USA will always need to balance their academic DNA with their churchly DNA."

In the first place, not all colleges and universities that are closely related to Mennonite Church USA are owned by Mennonite Church USA. I think the point that is being made is intended for "Mennonite Church USA related" rather than only for "Mennonite Church USA owned" institutions.

Second, I disagree with the assumption that doing good church-related education and good academic work is primarily a balancing act in which an institution tries not to be too academic or too churchly. Our church-related commitments and values should make us stronger academically, and our academic activity should benefit the church both directly and indirectly in a variety of ways. The task is to do both well rather than to balance one against the other and do neither well.—*George Lehman, Bluffton, Ohio*

Churches being bought off

When I was a young pastor, the church I came to had received a bequest of $250,000. Dreams of what to do with this munificence stirred us. Pave the parking lot with concrete, some said. Install a pipe organ, said others. Both dreams having been fulfilled, what could we do with the rest? It was agreed to have Mennonite Foundation manage the remainder, accepting its stipulation that funds not be invested in liquor or tobacco or war-making stocks—a chaste decision for a church and benefactor whose sanctuary furniture had once included a spittoon. The yearly interest was to be distributed as mission giving by the congregation. And so it was. If this decision were being made today, we would need to ask that funds not be invested in pharmaceutical companies whose bad faith has

IN THIS ISSUE

Arthur Paul Boers challenges the widespread practice of "personal sharing" in many congregations (page 8). "Gossip is not holy just because we call it a prayer concern," he writes and notes that "this invasive newcomer outranks, diminishes and even displaces praising God, singing hymns, listening to God's Word proclaimed and preached, offering our gifts to God or receiving God's blessings." In contrast to the corporate and horizontal nature of personal sharing, Anita Cleeton Greening describes her experience during three weeks of contemplative prayer (page 12). Finally, it is Mary's response to a visit from the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:46-55) that is one of the most powerful prayers we know: the Magnificat. Jan Johnson (page 16) says Mary's prayer-song "is a good example of how bringing Scripture into our everyday rhythms … can form our thoughts and inner self."—*Editor* replaced tobacco, liquor and the munitions complex. But we might be hard pressed.

A pharmaceutical company is buying off our churches with $45,000 gifts for sabbaticals and interim replacements for their pastors. Eli Lilly's foundation advertises this offer to pastors of all denominations.—*Donald R. Steelberg, Wichita, Kan.*

No relation to consumerism

We thank you for *The Mennonite* and its mission to glorify God. And it is good to hear from others in Readers Say. I would like to briefly respond to a letter in the Jan. 10 issue. In her response to "The Elusive Monster" (Mediaculture, Dec. 20, 2005), Ruth Eitzen asks whether the phrase "Jesus as my personal Savior" reflects consumer advertising. I do not see this phrase as driven by consumer advertising. The Bible is clear that every person must individually make the decision to believe or not believe (John 3:16). Each of us will die and face judgment (Hebrews 9:27). In Acts 2:39, Peter responded to the crowd in Jerusalem, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

This seems very personal (it certainly precedes consumer advertising). Maybe there is a better word or phrase than "personal," but I have not found a better descriptive word to express what I believe the Bible says.—*Harold E. Kraybill, Lebanon, Pa.*

Changing the definition of sin

First let me say that I am disappointed that *The Mennonite* would print such an open challenge to our denominational position on the issue of homosexuality as represented by Melvin D. Schmidt's "Speaking Out" (Dec. 20, 2005)—especially with no contrasting affirmation by denominational leaders for a difficult choice made by Allegheny Mennonite Conference leaders. This does not build confidence in Mennonite Church USA.

Second, let me point out a fallacy in Schmidt's argument for inclusion of lesbian and gay members. He asks why Mennonite Church USA would discipline Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church when it is not disciplining a congregation in Kansas that includes a couple guilty of sexual abuse. The difference is that the Kansas congregation is not trying to legitimize sexual abuse. They acknowledge that sexual abuse is wrong/sin. They are not lobbying to include practicing sexual abusers in the church. The sexual abusers will continue in church membership only if they repent of their sins—not change the definition of sin. What we are struggling with at Hyattsville and in other so-called "welcoming" congregations is the way sin is being redefined.—*Jewel Showalter, Landisville, Pa.*

Phrase is offensive

I question the adjective "racial-ethnic" in the Jan. 10 editorial ("Stewardship Surprises"). Where and how was this term derived? Who is included in this group? I, perhaps? A white woman of German descent whose ancestors were Mennonite as far back as our genealogy has been traced, I certainly am of a particular race of people and am sometimes described as ethnic Mennonite. Therefore, the term "racial-ethnic" quite logically could refer to me. However, it could refer to anyone, as all humans are part of a race and a cultural group of one kind or another.

As I read further, the intended meaning of the term became clear. And I became offended. Why? Because this term has been designated to mean anyone who is different from me and because we white members have the power to say that we are the average ones, the norm against which all others are judged. Such audacity!—*Brenda Jewitt, Gowanstown, Ont.*

Editor's note: The sidebar on page 40 explains our reasons for using the term "racial-ethnic."

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

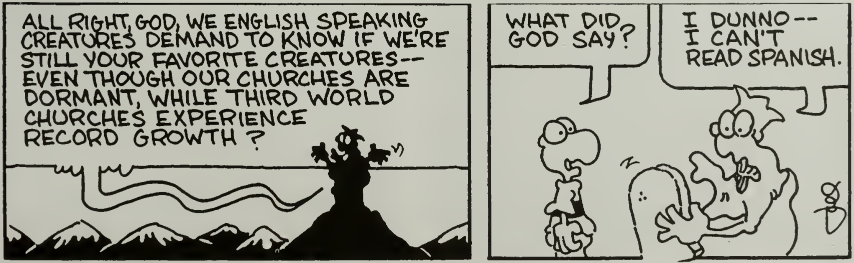
Regarding personal sharing, in my congregation there is (45 votes):

- ○ too much sharing (24%)
- ○ not enough sharing (18%)
- ○ the right amount (58%)
- ○ not sure (0%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Note: In order to accommodate more advertisers and to publish more news, we have increased the number of pages in this issue to 40.

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


ALL RIGHT, GOD, WE ENGLISH SPEAKING CREATURES DEMAND TO KNOW IF WE'RE STILL YOUR FAVORITE CREATURES-- EVEN THOUGH OUR CHURCHES ARE DORMANT, WHILE THIRD WORLD CHURCHES EXPERIENCE RECORD GROWTH ?
WHAT DID GOD SAY?
I DUNNO-- I CAN'T READ SPANISH.

IN BRIEF

Farming with Values that Last conference

Whole-farm pizza, mobile meat retailing and healthy soil are three of the workshops set for the third annual Farming with Values that Last conference, Feb. 24-26 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. This year's theme is "Models for the Journey." Keynote speaker David Kline, nature writer and organic dairy farmer, brings insights as an Amishman with extensive connections in the literary and agricultural worlds. For more information, go to www.laurelville.org. —*Cheryl Paulovich*

MCC provides flood assistance in India

Strong hurricane-like storms lashed the coastal area of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu in November and December 2005, causing severe flooding in areas hit hard by the tsunami in December 2004. The floodwaters damaged homes, slowed progress on Mennonite Central Committee's tsunami-related projects and again traumatized families. In response, MCC is providing rice, tarpaulins and blankets to 645 families—more than 2,100 people. Like MCC's tsunami response in the area, this project will be carried out by a partner organization, Social Unit for Community Health and Improvement. —*MCC*

Miller to lead health-care access response

NEWTON, Kan.—Glen E. Miller, a physician and church leader, has been appointed to lead Mennonite Church USA's response to the Charlotte 2005 Delegate Assembly resolution on health-care access during the next 18 months.

Miller, a resident of Goshen, Ind., said the appointment seemed like a logical thing to do. He has worked at the Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics (ACHE) on a manuscript looking at health care in developed and developing nations. He also led a Sunday school class examining the issue. In addition, Miller cites his background as an internist and community-minded person as being key motivators for his participation.

By 2004, the number of people without insurance in the United States had risen to about 46 million. The majority of medically indigent in the United States include racial-ethnic people and those considered below the poverty line.

"It is a problem in this country. We just have to get around to facing it and say, We're the richest country and there's no need for this here," Miller says.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Goodbye England, hello USA rugby

As a junior at Penn High School in Mishawaka, Ind., Conrad Bontrager began playing for the rugby team. Now as a first-year student at Goshen (Ind.) College, Bontrager continues with the sport as he plays on the USA Rugby Boys Under-19 National Team, after passing up the opportunity to play for a college in England on a full-ride scholarship.—*Goshen Colleg*

Christians help Pakistanis after earthquake

LANCASTER, Pa.—Reality did not match perception for some Americans and Pakistanis when they met in the earthquake-ravaged mountains of northern Pakistan.

Americans from historic peace churches thought they were going to a dangerous country with many Muslim fundamentalists and terrorists. Instead, they found hospitable, peace-loving people who want nothing to do with terrorists.

"[They] want peace as much or more than we do," says Jon Unger Brandt. "They were open and warm to Christians, with no love for terrorism."

Unger Brandt, a member of Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, Lancaster, which helped fund his trip to the mountains of Azad ("free") Kashmir, an independent Pakistani territory, was among 39 volunteers on a relief mission last month organized by Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), Salunga, Pa.

As for the English-speaking Pakistanis he met, "it's not their perception that American Christians are peace loving. They do not understand what we are doing in Iraq," he says, referring to the ongoing war. Unger Brandt is EMM's communications director.

The Americans worked hard, helping residents prepare to rebuild after the Oct. 8, 2005, earthquake that killed 87,000 people and left 3.5 million homeless.—*Lancaster New Era*

Janeen Bertsche Johnson

Seminary for the birds

Zach Farmwald (right), member of the Earthcare 4-H club, gets some help from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary student Matt Hickman as he builds a bluebird house which will be placed on the AMBS campus in Elkhart, Ind. The club built 12 bluebird houses and will place them along the edges of open areas on the AMBS campus to encourage nesting of Eastern bluebirds.—*AMBS*

MDS Board OKs hiring three new staff

HESSTON, Kan.—On Feb. 9, the Mennonite Disaster Service Board announced restructuring plans as well as the decision to hire three additional top-level staff designed to increase overall capacity in responding to the 2005 hurricanes. These decisions were made in light of the tremendous needs of those affected by the disasters, the continued strong volunteer base and the strong financial support MDS is receiving from donors.

These new positions will report directly to the executive director and be responsible for the areas of field operations, human resources and finance and accounting. Each position is designed to enhance the involvement of the grass-roots organization while increasing the average number of project sites from three to 11. This will allow greater numbers of workers to volunteer their time and result in more clients being helped to repair or rebuild their homes.—*MDS*

Fretz estate gift supports peace work

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—In his long life, J. Winfield Fretz had many friends, numerous interests and a web of church connections.

A year after Fretz died at age 94 on Jan. 24, 2005, the bulk of his and his wife Marguerite Fretz's estate (she died in 2002) has been given to support one of those interests at a church institution he served for many years. A gift of close to $300,000 will go to Bethel College's endowment for the support of the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Fretz was a professor of sociology at Bethel from 1942 to 1963 and served as Bethel's acting president in his last years at the college before going on to be the founding president of Conrad Grebel College (now University College) in Waterloo, Ont. He was also acting president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., 1983-84. He was a graduate of Bluffton (Ohio) College, now University, with honorary doctorates from both Bluffton and Conrad Grebel.—*Bethel College*

Churches raise money for water in Kenya

Churches in northwest Ohio are involved in a Food Resources Bank (FRB) Steer Project, now in its third year. FRB is a Christian coalition not for emergency feeding but for sustainable development programs issuing seed, training local people in water and soil management, building greenhouses and helping small-scale producers find markets.

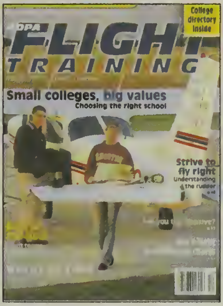
While many denominations support FRB, this project included donations from Central Mennonite Church in Archbold, Lockport Mennonite Church in Stryker and West Clinton Mennonite Church in Wauseon. Local farmers raised cattle used for a Burger Bash last May that brought in donations.

Last year the Steer Project brought in $43,000, and more than $10,000 has been collected to date for 2006. Last year's donations went toward a water project in Kenya.—*Pete Dinius*

Aviation program gets national exposure

HESSTON, Kan.—The cover of the December 2005 issue of *AOPA Flight Training* features a Hesston College aviation flight instructor and a student preparing for a training flight.

The monthly magazine's annual college aviation issue also contains a four-paragraph description of the two-year aviation program that has been offered at Hesston since the late 1960s.



Dan Miller, director of the college's aviation program, says it's exciting to get that kind of exposure. He says the cover photo and the article have generated four contacts from people who wouldn't otherwise have known about Hesston.

Pictured in the photo is Jared White, a 2003 graduate of the aviation program who served until the end of 2005 as a flight instructor. He works for Midwest LifeTeam, which operates out of Jabara Airport in Wichita, Kan. White and his airplane are based at Great Bend, Kan. The student, Kymberly Jenkinson, is an off-campus, part-time aviation student from Meade, Kan.—*Hesston College*

Bluffton University hosts anti-racism training

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Students, faculty and staff explored the issue of anti-racism during a weekend training session on the Bluffton University campus Feb. 3-6.

Three Damascus Road trainers—Conrad Moore, Rick Derksen and Sharon Williams, who took turns speaking about institutional racism—led 29 participants—23 students and six faculty and staff members.

The Damascus Road Anti-Racism Process, developed in 1995 and now part of Mennonite Central Committee, is designed to work toward long-term transformation of institutions, particularly churches and faith-based organizations.
—*Bluffton University*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Volunteer Barney Habegger dies

Warren H. "Barney" Habegger, 77, died Jan. 2. He served as vice president of Mennonite Men of Mennonite Church USA, chair of the Camp Friedenswald board and a member of the General Board and Commission of Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. He was also active on various committees of First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind. He was involved in the fundraising and construction of most of the major renovation projects at Camp Friedenswald and helped with building and renovation of church buildings throughout the United States, in Canada and Colombia.

Selective Service worker says to be ready in case

"We have to be ready for something we hope never happens," said Cassandra Costley, alternative service manager for the Selective Service System, Feb. 2 at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. She visited Bethel, Hesston and Tabor colleges in Kansas Feb. 1-3 and spoke to more than 1,000 youth and adults, including Mennonites and Beachy Amish. She came to Kansas at the invitation of Mennonite Mission Network, whose voluntary service programs would be one source of alternative service jobs if a draft were reinstated.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Thank you for zebra mussels, Asian ladybugs and sharing?

Sharing in worship should not disrupt but be discerned.

by Arthur Paul Boers

When friends moved to a new community, they had a surprising priority in discerning which church to attend: They wanted one without sharing in Sunday worship. That would not be easy to locate in Mennonite churches these days.

Once I would have scoffed at this guideline. As a teen, I was happy to switch to a church with sharing every Sunday. (One reason I was glad, I now realize, is because I could satisfy my enjoyment of receiving attention; I could stand in front of the congregation whenever I wanted.)

In the congregations I served as a pastor, I was affirmed for successfully introducing and encouraging sharing in worship. But the more I pay attention to this part of the service, the more uncertain I am about its appropriateness.

Zebra mussels, Asian ladybugs and sharing: Many of us in the last few years encountered Asian ladybugs; they resemble ladybugs, except they bite and multiply at an astonishing rate, making a huge nuisance of themselves. People near the Great Lakes know that zebra mussels came from overseas (probably in ocean liner ballast) and wreak ecological havoc. Invasive non-native species are brought here, often by accident (on ships, on car tires, in crates) or sometimes even introduced deliberately (as was the case with starlings decades ago). These invaders do not have natural predators and so become pests, upsetting ecological balances, displacing native species, changing fields, forests, farms and water systems. They dominate their surrounding context with severely damaging results. And we are at a loss to know how to control them.

Sharing is a non-native invader that distorts worship and becomes impossible to dislodge.

Sharing is a non-native invader that distorts worship and becomes impossible to dislodge. Our Mennonite practice of it is rooted in Wednesday prayer meetings. As those services dwindled, personal revelations and prayer requests migrated to Sunday. Now many cannot imagine challenging sharing.

It is alarming to hear—as I often do—that people's favorite part of worship is the lifting of joys and concerns. A whole generation was raised with this as the priority. One gets the impression we could happily drop many parts of worship but dare not mess with sharing. Indeed, churches often skip over, shorten or omit other parts of their services when sharing goes "too long." We put time limits on duly designated leaders who carefully prepare prayers and sermons but hesitate to restrict people who speak off the cuff.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

This invasive worship newcomer outranks, diminishes and even displaces praising God, singing hymns, listening to God's Word proclaimed and preached, offering our gifts to God or receiving God's blessings. This late addition is treated as the most important part of worship. It is given the most time and energy. Its emotional tone often shapes people's impressions and memory of the entire morning. People leave remembering more about private details and impressions of others' lives than about the gospel that was preached. Often services end on a note of lament, complaint and mourning when a certain few predominate. Rather than departing worship deflated, we need to be empowered by God's good news.

Questionable types of sharing: I grow less and less convinced about the appropriateness of sharing as I reflect on the kinds of things people divulge. And I am astonished that so few question this.

Why do we mostly pray for health problems? And why so many requests about people that much of the congregation does not even know?

The number one prayer request is for medical ailments, usually someone beyond the congregation and often explained in needlessly graphic and explicit detail. Why do we mostly pray for health problems? And why so many requests about people that much of the congregation does not even know?

Or people give one-sided explanations of their position in a conflict or their interpretation of someone else's problems. When I was a pastor, a striking civil servant invited our prayers of support while labeling government leaders "stupid." I also witness people complaining about spouses and children (often teens). Sometimes the people named are present, other times not; either way it is problematic. I wonder how relatives feel about being cited this way in public. This does not strike me as an effective church growth strategy.

Particularly baffling is when people make public information that ought to be private. People discuss confidential aspects of work, for example. In one service, a visitor—whatever possessed him?—did so before a roomful of people, many that he did not know, then asked the 150 or so to keep his remarks confidential. Meanwhile, the entire service was taped and would be overheard by shut-ins and others who received cassettes of that service. Another time I heard someone tell us whose job she was coveting. (It was held by another Mennonite.)

Others share ethically questionable decisions. Somehow sharing sanctifies it. People speak of buying luxuries, boast of exotic vacations or announce decisions about breaking up or blending their family.

Still others find it appropriate to drop names or give long explanations of situations that many in the room, not just visitors, cannot understand. I once heard a person elaborately detail what the family did during a weeklong visit "back home" in another state, including naming every friend and relative (dozens in all) visited every morning, afternoon and evening of that week.

It is not about giving a voice to everyone. In fact, a few share a lot, and most speak seldom or not at all. This is not true sharing but the microphone monopoly of a minority. Why can people appoint themselves to share whatever, whenever and for as long as they like, while everything else about worship is carefully discerned? Why is their agenda and emotional aura allowed to predominate in worship?

After a particularly embarrassing sharing time, a friend joked about its Jerry Springer quality. The tell-all atmosphere of talk show television shapes an entire generation's view of worship. The result is that we become overly focused on individual problems, bringing those to center stage rather than placing our lives in the context of God's work.

Scriptural counsel: As personal sharing is relatively new to Christian worship—and even more recent for Mennonites—it is not something the Bible directly addresses. The closest piece of scriptural counsel I can find comes from Paul in 1 Corinthians 14. He writes: "When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation." It is appropriate that people be inspired to bring something to the gathering of the body. But then he suggests elements of discernment, something sorely lacking in how we share.

First, Paul says, "Let all things be done for building up" and later notes that prophecies are "so that all may learn and all be encouraged." In other words, what is lifted up should encourage and empower. Some things may not be appropriately named in public. How often have you experienced worship as a downer because of sharing? Who in our leadership is willing to suggest it is wrong to bring to the entire body something that may confuse, dishearten, alienate or embarrass?

Second, Paul suggests that in the case of tongue speaking, "let there be only two or at most three." Even divinely inspired glossolalia needs a limit. Only so many ad hoc revelations are permitted. Could we not suggest parameters with sharing? Only so many people sharing a week? Or give each a minute? Or grant 10 minutes total for all sharing? (Then if someone chooses a long microphone monopoly, that person denies someone else the chance to speak.)

Third, Paul insists that tongues should be interpreted, and if there is no interpreter then "let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God." Sometimes it is better to hold one's tongue.

Fourth, all prophecies are to be tested, "and let the others weigh what is said." Church leaders have the right and even the responsibility to critique and exercise discernment over what is spoken in church. When people misuse sharing, they should be corrected for abusing worship, "for God is a God not of disorder but of peace." How can we justify unrestrained sharing that is practiced without accountability or discernment?

Parting counsel: As a former pastor, I take seriously people's need to be heard and receive support and prayer. While I grow suspicious of sharing, I do not completely dismiss it. I still sometimes get up on Sundays and speak when the opportunity is given and I think the Spirit moves.

Yet two more things need to be noted.

First, I propose that we remind people to be cautious about naming concerns regarding others. If you would not want your employer, spouse, neighbor or child to hear what you say about them, then do not speak it aloud in public worship. Gossip is not holy just because we call it a prayer concern.

Second, it is good for people to have supportive prayers, but there are many ways to do this. Brief requests during worship can be significant. Churches can make people and space available so that those who need prayer can meet with others and be prayed for in private. Sometimes in our church, someone will mention a concern and then meet afterward for prayer with a small group. Yet private and personal needs should not dominate the priority of public worship. As William Orr and James Arthur Walther write in their commentary on 1 Corinthians 14: "The life of the church is more important than the religious development or expression of a single person."

In one of my churches, a disturbed person grew concerned about the endangered status of whales. Week after week, he rose and spoke with obsessive fervor about this issue. I started responding automatically—and with my tongue a little in my cheek—"Thank you for sharing." I am still not sure what else I could or should have done in that situation. As time passes, I grow more ambivalent and less thankful for much of what passes for Sunday morning joys and concerns.

Church leaders have the right and even the responsibility to critique and exercise discernment over what is spoken in church.

Happily, my friends managed to succeed in the unlikely goal of finding a church that did not have Sunday sharing. Now I wish more of us would ponder the meaning of Paul's counsel that "all things should be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14.40).

Arthur Paul Boers teaches pastoral theology and spiritual formation at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and is a member of Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

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One student chaplain's three-week exploration of contemplative prayer

by Anita Cleeton Greening

While the flurry and frenzy of Christmas preparations began in November 2004, I found myself thrust into a three-week practice of the discipline of contemplative prayer for my Clinical Pastoral Education program. My CPE supervisor asked each of us in our group of three chaplain residents to spend three weeks concentrating some time each day on a certain spiritual discipline. Past experience taught me that I had a love-hate relationship with contemplative prayer. Much like a fabled little girl with a curl, I found that contemplative prayer could be very good, or it could be, well, maybe not horrid but certainly lifeless.

I entered the project determined that this three-week practice would be productive, enriching and enlightening. During the first week I struggled to enter contemplative prayer. I reread *Open Minds Open Hearts* by Thomas Keating. Keating proposes a regimented, structured method for "centering prayer." The intent is to completely open the mind to God, discarding all thoughts or feelings other than openness to God. The intent of the prayer is companionship with God as opposed to speaking to God, awaiting a divine word or even experiencing the presence of God. The focus is on the gift of the time to God, not on receiving anything from God. A common problem is the difficulty of the mind to remain in this open state. I certainly had this problem, yet I persisted. It seemed like the perfect avenue for a results-oriented person.

Panting

Silken awareness
 encompasses soul
Divine presence
 arrives only to flee
Frantic ramblings
 return to control
Waiting again
 for the Holy

Chattering monkeys, trembli

Buddhists see the mind as wild and difficult to tame. The mind leaps from thought to thought like a wild monkey, chattering and swinging from tree branch to tree branch. Keating's method of centering prayer uses a "sacred word" to return to being with God after the mind has wandered. The sacred word is chosen by the person praying. It should be short and an appropriate address for the prayer: Jesus, holy, presence, Spirit and love are examples. In the first days of the integration project, I often felt that all I could to do was constantly repeat the sacred word because my wild monkey mind was so active.

Juxtaposition

White knuckled
Trembling hands
Knees bent
Head bowed

Which should be feared?

Hope spoken broken
Love dealt felt
Grace spilled filled

Silence deafening flattening
Nothing yawning dawning

Overwhelmed
 or
Abandoned

Revelation struggle

During this time, I turned to poetry to express the turmoil within me. The first poem, "Panting" (above left), reflects the frustration I felt at the brevity of centering prayer. Contemplative prayer seemed to appear in glimpses as brief as the blink of an eye. Despite my eagerness to take on the project and my determination to participate fully, I experienced an internal struggle. While coming close to God can be an empowering experience, it can also be frightening. A second poem, "Juxtaposition" (at left), refers to that tension between longing and fear.

Kerry, my spiritual director, helped me understand that the practice I was undertaking may not have been the method I needed at the time. She suggested alternative entries to contemplative prayer. Her advice became a turning point in my prayer life.

The next evening I began a 24-hour silent retreat, and I was the only person using the facilities. I did some journaling and read more on contemplative prayer. The next

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I had the opportunity to spend the day with Someone much like a beloved and trusted friend.

g hands and loving embraces

morning, as I opened my mind and heart to God, the monkeys of my mind quieted. Feminine images of God came, and I experienced a presence best described as female, sitting on the arm of the chair with an arm around my shoulders, head leaning on mine. It seemed so real; I could feel pressure on my shoulders, arm and head. I had the urge to hold my breath during the experience, but the sense of presence remained longer than I could have held my breath. The thought came to me that I had the opportunity to spend the day with Someone much like a beloved and trusted friend. This experience of Presence lasted several minutes. Afterward I went back to my room and turned again to poetry to reflect on the experience.

I spent the remaining hours of my retreat knowing I was accompanied by someone with whom I could enjoy a relaxed communion. The day held two other contrasts or changes for me. I was blessed to spend time with Her in the outdoor chapel, where I came to a new understanding of the cross. I walked the outdoor labyrinth, following the printed instructions for walking and praying, then sitting in the center of the labyrinth to receive a word from God. No word came as I waited. Giving up, I stood and distinctly heard, "You don't always have to sit still to hear from God."

Journaling later helped me understand that experiencing God in the feminine had been beneficial to me. During my childhood I developed a distrust for males that I am slowly understanding. Overriding masculine images of God in church and society have not always helped my spiritual growth. My distrust issues probably precipitated my fear and pulling back from God in previous times of closeness.

In my next session with Kerry, she made the connection between my positive reactions to my experience of a feminine image of God and previous, frightening experiences. She knew nothing about my distrust of some men. Her insight helped me understand that I was correctly interpreting my past and present as they relate to my changing relationship with God.

Throughout the remainder of the three-week practice, I had less difficulty entering that place of meeting God in contemplative prayer. My mind is no less the wild monkey it was; it still chatters and leaps from tree to tree. But the chattering has grown softer, and the swinging from branch to branch has slowed.

When I reported to my supervisor about my time in prayer and retreat, he asked if I wanted to repeat the experience. I answered a resounding yes. I marvel at the many ways change has come into my relationship with God and my perceptions about my spiritual life. I entered the practice of contemplative prayer with my own agenda, but that was put aside for a more meaningful experience than I could have ever anticipated.

Anita Greening is a CPE resident at the Kansas City Veteran's Administration Medical Center under the supervision of Robert J. Carlson, a member of Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan.

together ■ sharing all of Christ with all of creation

PART 4 OF AN EIGHT-PART SERIES

Street-corner evangelist's persistence leads friend to faith

by Ann Graham Price

Sara Orcajo Blanco does not remember much about the questionnaire that changed her life. She does not even remember any of the questions on it. It meant nothing to her at the time.

Some 20 years later, that questionnaire provides a singular reminder of the power of evangelism: Blanco is the sole convert, nurtured through personal connections, from a decade of street ministry through the Burgos (Spain) Mennonite Church.

Blanco was raised Catholic, and the church people on the streets that cold winter day were asking Blanco and her friend questions about faith.

"They were asking if we knew God, or something like that," she shrugged.

Like many of her peers in Spain, Blanco grew up in a house divided, with one parent nominally Catholic, the other an avowed atheist. But it wasn't a big deal. She attended church for a handful of important occasions—christenings, First Communion, confirmation, weddings and funerals—and at few other times. It was what everybody did.

She figured she knew about as much as anyone else as far as religion was concerned.

She remembers that she recognized one of the people administering the questionnaire. It was a neighborhood acquaintance, Richard, who had recently kicked a drug habit through a Christian ministry.

What stands out most vividly in her mind, all these years later, is Richard's persistence in sharing his new-found faith in Jesus.

He was with a group of people from the newly formed Burgos Mennonite Church, and they were all talking about Jesus in a way she had never heard before.

"It was the hippie years, democracy was opening up and people were ready to rebel against the Catholic church," says Connie Byler, who serves through Mennonite Mission Network in Burgos with her husband, Dennis.

Connie describes the years after the death in 1975 of longtime dictator Francisco Franco as a time when many of the traditional power structures in society collapsed. One of those was the powerful Catholic church, which had been the official state church for as long as anyone could remember.

"The Holy Spirit visited Spain and swept across the youth groups," she says. "Young people were living in community. Parents were getting nervous. The media called it a cult."

In this atmosphere of political restlessness, the Bylers and others from Burgos Mennonite Church—at the time a fledgling congregation—boldly went out to proclaim the gospel.

"Going out into the streets in the mid-'80s was an expression of democratic freedom here and served to crack the all-Catholic mentality," Connie says. "We tried everything, including evangelizing on the streets, although it didn't seem to work.

"We used every artistic, creative and musical ability we could come up with, every method we heard about," she says. "We were obeying the voice of the Spirit. That's what God was telling us we had to do. It was a joy."

That was how Blanco happened to meet them one day, when she was in her early 20s.

Richard invited Blanco and her friend to watch "the *Jesus* film." (According to its Web site, the film *Jesus* is a two-hour docudrama about the life of Christ, released in 1979, with the goal of reaching "every nation, tribe, people and tongue, helping them see and hear the story of Jesus in a language they can understand.")

Blanco and her friend declined this first invitation. But Richard persisted, inviting the two friends to church events. Finally Blanco heard a direct invitation to accept Jesus into her life.

Connie Byler (right), with Miguel Manuel Villar and Ana Rosa Asun Hervia, members of Burgos Mennonite Church, on the streets of Burgos, where church members once evangelized.

"I didn't move out of my seat, although something was born in my heart that day," she says.

She began attending Burgos Mennonite Church, where she developed personal relationships with the Bylers and others that helped her faith develop and grow. Soon after, she accepted Christ into her heart.

Ever since, she has been a part of the church, where members challenge each other to continue growing in faith. Eventually she became part of the church-planting team.

Today she lives in a house with another Mennonite woman, intentionally choosing community as an expression of her Christian faith.

She values living in community, she says, because she can learn things from others and she likes sharing her hospitality and joy with them.

Does she believe she is a more effective witness for Jesus because she lives in intentional community?

"Yes," she says. The close relationships in a shared living arrangement provide "the opportunity to serve someone, to be a reflection of the Person who is investing in my own life."

Indeed, she credits close relationships rather than the street ministry as the real reason she is a Christian now.

"The same words were used to speak to so many people, and nothing happened," she says. "In my case, I believe it took that personal contact."

It is a privilege to share her home with others, which she sees as an opportunity to serve someone else and be a reflection of the One who has invested in her life. If God has a special calling on her life now, Blanco says, it is "to be obedient and submissive to Jesus, to my authorities in the church and to the people who live in my home."

For the rest, she is content to continue being faithful and leave the details—the chance encounters with others who may not yet recognize their own spiritual hunger—up to God.

Ann Graham Price is a writer for Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart, Ind.

The close relationships in a shared living arrangement provide the opportunity to serve someone, to be a reflection of the Person who is investing in my own life.
—Sara Orcajo Blanco

After initial contact, follow-up is crucial

According to the people involved with Mennonite Mission Network through evangelism ministries around the world, such ministries can be an effective way to bring people to Christ. The key element is follow-up—the presence of ongoing personal relationships to nurture new Christians and help them grow in their faith.

In Barranquilla, Colombia, for example, Blas Garcia helped coordinate a door-to-door survey in a neighborhood where few people attend church. The survey has contributed to the start-up of a new congregation, according to Garcia, a youth coordinator with the Barranquilla Mennonite Church. Participants were invited to attend Bible study groups afterward. Those groups have been well-attended, and many participants have given their lives to Jesus.

Garcia also helped organize the local celebration of the Colombian Mennonite Church's annual day of Pan y Paz (bread and peace). On the streets of Barranquilla they shared bread and Scripture passages on peace as a testimony for alternatives to violence.

In India, evangelism has been important for many years, but for the last five years evangelism and church planting have been priorities, according to Bihar Mennonite Mandli's president, Emmanuel Minj.

The process includes person-to-person contact and visiting a family for prayer. Fellowships are started as follow-ups to these initial visits. Most are small home churches and Bible study groups. Thus far, 34 have received Christ and taken baptism. Seven new fellowships have been formed within the last two years.

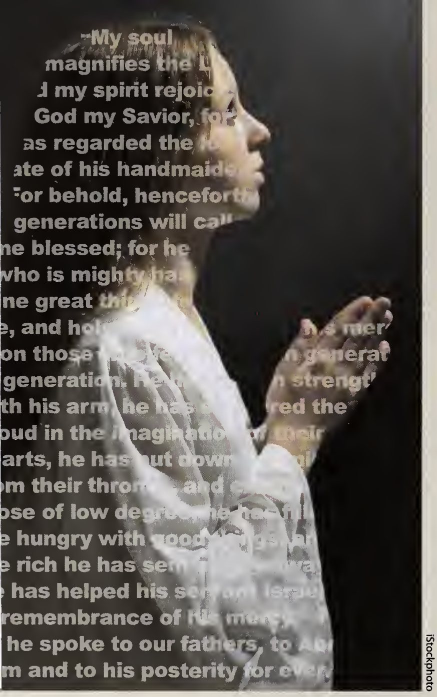
According to Garcia, people in Colombia are eager to learn about Jesus. "Many people come because of problems," he says. "They're looking for help, and they're finding that help."

But there is another benefit. Doing this kind of evangelism has had a powerful effect on church members, he says. It gets them excited about what is happening in their church.

"We from the church are excited that in such a short period of time we've been able to accomplish so much," he says.—*Ann Graham Price*

Ryan Miller

Connie and Dennis Byler have lived in Burgos, Spain, more than 24 years. They serve in a supportive capacity to the leadership of the handful of Mennonite churches in Spain. He also teaches at a seminary near Madrid. She teaches English part-time and works with a hospice center for people living with AIDS.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remembrance of his mercy,
he spoke to our fathers, to Abr
m and to his posterity for ever

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The first Chris

Mary teaches us the importance of internalizing Scripture.

by Jan Johnson

Let's say you were given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be involved in a venture that would change the world. How would you respond? Would you hesitate, as Moses did at the burning bush? Would you agree but then run away, as Jonah did? Or might you ask doubtful questions, as Gideon did?

When Gabriel visited Mary, announcing to her the parenting mission of all time, Mary asked a few questions and surrendered herself. A little later, when her older cousin Elizabeth greeted her as blessed among women, Mary burst forth in a seemingly spontaneous, passionate prayer-song. What sort of teenager was Mary that she had more to say than "Wow" or "Awesome!"?

Her response, which is called the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), is so magnificent that some folks have doubted that an illiterate peasant girl could have composed this song. Yet others have caught on that her song is composed from the words of Hannah's celebration of Samuel's birth as well as several psalms (1 Samuel 2:1-10; Psalm 38:6; 71:19; 111:9; 103:17; 98:1; 107:9; 98:3; 132:11). In fact, writes Norval Geldenhuys in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke* (Eerdmans, 1977), observers "have asked whether Mary had her Old Testament open before her when she uttered the song. They forget that all pious Israelites from their childhood days knew by heart songs from the Old Testament and often sang them in the home circle and at celebrations. Mary was steeped in the poetical literature of her nation, and accordingly her hymn also bears the unmistakable signs of it."

In Mary's case, the language and pattern of Scripture was so embedded in her that it shaped her response to the miraculous event that would change her life (and mine) forever.

The development of this first Christmas song ever is a good example of how bringing Scripture into our everyday rhythms—even in lawn-mowing or dishwashing songs—can form our thoughts and inner self. In Mary's case, the language and pattern of Scripture was so embedded in her that it shaped her response to the miraculous event that would change her life (and mine) forever. Mary overflowed with ideas, words and phrases from these passages that were so knit in her soul. Both songs

- had a strong sense of personal involvement evidenced by personal pronouns: my soul, my spirit, the Mighty One has done great things for me (Mary); my heart; my mouth; I delight in your deliverance (Hannah);
- focused on God's greatness: Holy is your name (Mary); there is no one holy like the Lord (Hannah);
- looked beyond the singer's concerns to how God intervenes in the world for the hopeless: He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty (Mary); he raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap (Hannah).

In addition, Mary not only got the words right but understood the heart of God about her circumstances. Others no doubt viewed Mary's circumstances—unmarried but pregnant—as problematic. Mary did not. Instead her song was freighted with words of trust: "From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me."

Mary's song also shows that she did not mechanically memorize Hannah's song

mas song

and the psalm fragments—you know that struggle that occurs in memorization of knitting the eyebrows and rolling eyes to recall the exact wording (as we often do). Once you get the words right, you're home free.

The flowing composition indicates that Mary knew the passages by heart. Because the Spirit-drenched words had molded her thought patterns and conversation with God, she belted out these words off the cuff without performing them, trying to be spiritual or impress anyone. She had spent years letting God's ideas in Hannah's words cultivate her heart, so the words and ideas were now hers. All this treasuring and pondering of ancient words trained her well to ponder later the words and actions of Jesus (Luke 2:19, 51).

Mary's method? How does our heart learn to respond with the heart of God as instinctively as Mary did? By entering into passages of Scripture this way and letting them become part of us. Such absorption of God's thoughts involves a variety of spiritual disciplines. When our spirituality is a relational process rather than a checklist of good things to do, these practices are engaging and even fun, not laborious. They become our way of "hanging out" with God.

Studying the passage helps us understand the background and circumstances of the passage so that we can establish meaning and connections with characters and concepts through which God speaks. Concentrating on words and phrases this way can bring understanding.

Meditating on the passage, we take the words and ideas of the passage down into the depths of ourselves into our will and feelings. We hold the words on our tongue as we would savor a piece of candy. We picture ourselves in the person's circumstances or ask why the words meant what they did to the speaker. Mary must have often put herself in Hannah's place.

Praying the passage helps us respond to this transcendent God who speaks to us. We personalize the words of Scripture until they express our deepest self.

Memorizing the passage can make it easier to meditate on it because it will always be handy. Many people struggle to memorize Scripture or have tried it and become turned off because it seemed like such work. So start by not memorizing at all. Instead, study and meditate on the passage for at least a month. (Try passages such as 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 or Psalm 23 instead of isolated and unrelated verses.) Cut it up as if it were that piece of candy and examine it. Perhaps outline it or find the words that connect with each other. Pick out the words that jump out at you and rest in them. As we study and meditate, we let the words and ideas move us deeply by pondering them. We find we have phrases and verses memorized before even trying.

In this way, the words, phrases and ideas become part of our very soul. "Its very contours become the contours of our thoughts, words and hopes," writes Glandion Carney and William Long in *Yearning Minds and Burning Hearts* (Baker Books, 1997). "This is beyond the stage where Scripture is used to extract comforting verses or even 'principles of living.' [God, in the form of] Scripture becomes our most engaging conversation partner."

At that rate, we're likely to respond spontaneously with words that bless and motivate.

Jan Johnson is the author of When the Soul Listens, Enjoying the Presence of God and the Spiritual Disciplines Bible Studies *(www.janjohnson.org). She lives in Simi Valley, Calif.*

The Feast of the Annunciation

This feast, observed March 25 on the church calendar, commemorates the announcement of the Incarnation by the angel Gabriel to Virgin Mary and the conception of Christ in her womb (Luke 1:26-38). The date is usually taken to depend on that of Christ's nativity (Dec. 25), though a different tradition held that the dependence was the other way around and associated the date of the Lord's conception with his crucifixion. —*from* The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church

Ashes, ashes, we all fall down

Marlene Kropf is minister of worship, congregational and ministerial leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

Ash Wednesday won't be the same as usual this year. For more than 20 years, I've been attending and leading Ash Wednesday worship services. Each year I'm moved as I receive the mark of ashes on my forehead and hear the words, “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

What makes this year different is that we buried my mother just before Christmas. Her life has ended. Her body is disintegrating into dust. Now, in a more forceful way than ever before, I will hear the words spoken to me personally. I am next in line—vulnerable, fragile, mortal.

Although I live 2,000 miles away from my family in Oregon, I was able to be present for a good part of Mom's final journey. As she became weaker, we needed to feed her, bathe her and lift her in and out of bed and into her wheelchair. At one point I said to her, “The cycle has come full circle, Mom. You fed and cared for me when I was an infant. Now I'm doing the same for you.”

> **If we are wise, we will yield to the invitation to receive the mark of ashes once again and endure the wilderness of transformation.**

In some ways, her last days were like a return to infancy. Helpless and bedfast, she eventually couldn't talk anymore. Yet she could still communicate—with her eyes and finally just with her eyebrows. Then her breathing slowed, and she took her last breath. Through tear-filled eyes, we watched the color and vitality drain from her body. In the end, nothing remained but love.

Ash Wednesday ushers us into Lent, a season that foreshadows our annual descent into darkness and death. Marked with ashes in the shape of a cross, we are reminded that the Christian journey has three movements. In the first movement, in the beginning, we are blessed by God. Both in our creation and in our baptism, God embraces us and says, “You are my beloved; with you I am well pleased.” Then in the second movement we hear a call, “Follow me,” and we enter a perilous journey without a detailed map. All we are promised is that Jesus will walk with us. We will not be left alone, and we will be guided along the way.

Reminiscent of both Israel's journey of 40 years in the wilderness and Jesus' 40 days of temptation in the wilderness, the 40 days of Lent introduce a time of disequilibrium into our lives. If we are healthy and affluent, Lent calls us to face our inner poverty and our illusions of self-sufficiency. If we are weak and needy, Lent reminds us that God reaches toward us in love and will never let us go. For the followers of Jesus, the wilderness journey means confronting our false self and all the distortions that restrict our growth in love.

We can resist Lent with its call to conversion and transformation. It is understandable that we may prefer to step gingerly around the demands of this season and pretend that all is well. But if we are wise, we will yield to the invitation to receive the mark of ashes once again and endure the wilderness of transformation.

What we often don't see in the beginning is that the third part of the journey leads to an even deeper descent—a descent to the cross. Like Jesus, we are called to die, for the mystery at the heart of reality proclaims that dying is a necessary prelude to rising. But when we die, we discover, as Jesus did, that death opens into resurrection.

After the sober prelude of Lent come 50 days of celebration—the bright, colorful, life-affirming season between Easter and Pentecost: 40 days to remember our frailty and 50 days to embrace the joy of resurrection. The grave is not the end. Though it is an inevitable part of our humanity, it opens us to the embrace of God's eternal love. And in such love we can trust.

From the floral spray on my mother's grave, I carried a handful of roses home to Indiana. Someone told me I could put them in water, and they would develop roots. Sure enough, in just a few weeks, I discovered tiny roots emerging. The impulse to life is strong. And if new life emerges so naturally in the plant world, how much more will it come forth in those whom God calls beloved. Julian of Norwich, 14th-century mystic and theologian, affirmed, “What God made, God loves, and what God loves, God will keep.” We can trust in God's power to bring life out of death.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The spiritual lives of American teenagers**—Bob Yoder
- **Youth ministry is missional**—Daniel Medina-Hernandez

New environmental group is formed

Mennonite Creation Care Network succeeds Environmental Task Force.

Vision: Healing and Hope. When most people hear these words that sum up the vision of Mennonite Church USA, they picture God's healing and hope extended to human beings. A new organization, Mennonite Creation Care Network (MCCN), hopes to broaden this image to include rivers, forests, deserts, seas, prairies—and all the living creatures within them.

Mennonite Creation Care Network is the successor to the Environmental Task Force that served the former Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church from 1989 to 2004. That task force disbanded in 2004 due to lack of funding and a home within the Mennonite Church USA's infrastructure.

By contrast, MCCN is beginning its life with two sponsoring organizations and a modest budget. MMA will contribute some staff time and assist with startup costs from fraternal benefits funds for 2006. Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, a program of Goshen (Ind.) College, will assist with administrative leadership.

"Mennonite Mutual Aid is a logical choice for a home for creation care because it is the stewardship agency of the church," says Vyron Schmidt, MMA's vice president of fraternal benefits.

Schmidt served on the steering committee that designed MCCN and was instrumental in encouraging MMA to take the fledgling creation care organization under its wing.

MMA encourages stewardship of time, talents and relationships as well as money, Schmidt points out, and our relationship with the earth is one of the relationships that needs attention.

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center is a 1,150-acre nature preserve in northern Indiana. Its staff of 14 has expertise in areas such as environmental education, sustainable building, land management and agroecology.

Luke Gascho, executive director of Merry Lea, will chair MCCN's planning group, the Creation Council.

MCCN is a binational organization and has ties to a number of other Mennonite bodies. It has received the blessing of both the Formation Council of Mennonite Church Canada and the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA.

MCCN's initial steering committee included representatives from Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Camping Association, Mennonite Central Committee and a Mennonite high school.

MCCN's council met for the first time in Goshen, Ind., in late January to get acquainted and envision the future of the organization. The two-day meeting left an entire living room floor littered with flipchart sheets, Bibles and books such as Steven Bouma-Prediger's *For the Beauty of the Earth* and articles by Wendell Berry.

Courtesy photo

Those who attended Mennonite Creation Care Network's first Creation Care Council meeting (back row, left to right): Vyron Schmidt, Dave Hockman-Wert, Jennifer Halteman Schrock, Greg Bowman; front row: Amy Thut, Luke Gascho, Jim Smith. Not pictured: Joanne Moyer, David Neufeld

Luke Gascho, who chaired the meeting, is unapologetic about the time devoted to scriptural and theological underpinnings.

"I believe it is critical that all of our actions grow out of our belief system," he says. "If we focus just on a good cause—cleaning up a river, for example, or avoiding Styrofoam cups—we end up with a singular focus that can be very narrow. Building on Scripture and theology gives us a broader foundation for our actions and caring for the earth. You start to look at life differently instead of just reacting to problems."

The council also discussed its next steps. First on the list is gathering names for a directory of people with environmental interests and skills. People who would like to be part of this directory should check MCCN's Web site, www.mennocreationcare.org and then email lukeag@goshen.edu or call 260-799-5869.

MCCN also hopes to collect information about environmental concerns Mennonite churches see in their communities and congregations—and stories about efforts to protect God's creation.

Another goal on the horizon for MCCN is a Creation Summit. In 1995, the Environmental Task Force held a summit in Wisconsin that drew a healthy mix of academics, students, environmental professionals and hands-on folk from all walks of life. That gathering later generated the book, *Creation and the Environment: An Anabaptist Perspective on a Sustainable World*, edited by Calvin Redekop. MCCN hopes to hold a similar event in 2008.—*Jennifer Halteman Schrock of Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center*

MC USA should focus on immigration issues, say Pacific Southwest leaders

Everett J. Thomas

Retired medical doctor Glenn Miller (left), recently appointed Mennonite Church USA's Healthcare Access program manager (see page 6), tells the Executive Board that even the *New York Times* is now calling for a one-payer system to resolve the health-care access crisis in the United States. Sharon Waltner is Mennonite Church USA moderator-elect and Roy Williams is the current moderator.

When Executive Board members asked leaders of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference (PSMC) what they needed from Mennonite Church USA, the board got an unambiguous answer: Help us with immigration problems.

Meeting near the Los Angeles airport Feb. 2-4, the Executive Board followed its usual pattern of "listening to the owners." In this setting the owners included PSMC staff and board members from Arizona and California. Because the Executive Board was also meeting conjointly with the Mennonite Mission Network board, it became a three-way meeting.

"In southern California, a large percentage of our congregations are illegals," said PSMC conference minister Al Whaley. "What does that mean for helping them? Do we defy the law?"

The law Whaley referred to is HR 4437, a bill in Congress that was recently passed by the House of Representatives and is now being considered by the Senate. If the bill becomes law, it could mean it is illegal to help an undocumented resident in the United States.

"We will commit civil disobedience," said fellow conference minister Jeff Wright. "Fifty pastors will go to jail. We will not tolerate criminalizing pastoral work. We hope the Executive Board and Mennonite Mission Network have a bail fund."

Leah Ann Alcazar, PSMC moderator, suggested the Executive Board give as much attention to immigration issues as it has been giving to health-care access issues and other peace and justice matters.

"We need you to spend less time talking about a [military] draft that is not going to happen," said Wright, "and more time talking about a law that makes us felons."

To provide both boards with some context for their work, Wright explained the multicultural nature of Mennonite Church USA membership in southern California.

"Eighty-six percent were born outside the United States," Wright said, "and 92 percent are people of color."

There are 44 congregations, five church plants and four church planting projects underway in the conference, Wright said. In addition to southern California, PSMC has two other regions: Arizona and northern California.

Mission Network gets reviewed

The two boards met together as part of a four-year, in-depth review of Mennonite Mission Network. Because both boards ended their fiscal years on Jan. 31, finances and problems with the Mennonite Church USA's First Fruits funding system were front and center. But Lee Smucker, chair of the Mission Network board, announced some unexpected news about their $9.5 million budget.

"It appears we will be within $30,000 of our contributions budget," Smucker said. "We received $300,000 more in December than a year ago. We're really excited about what appears to be a strong ending."

Smucker said that as late as last October, Mennonite Mission Network was anticipating it would end the 2005-06 fiscal year with a shortfall of more than $400,000.

Mission Network board members were also excited about a potential new building project: a $6.83 million facility adjacent to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary's campus in Elkhart, Ind. The facility would house Mission Network staff in the Elkhart area as well as staff for other Mennonite Church USA agencies.

"The potential for Mennonite Church USA is much bigger than having a building paid for," said Mission Network board member Bill Hochstetler. "The real benefit is in a fund-raising effort strengthening relationships and giving our constituency confidence in executive leadership and the people in this room."

But others had questions about the way such a project would be perceived.

"People in my [central Kansas] area will say, 'They complain about not having enough money ... and bringing home missionaries while building a fancy new building," said Executive Board member Kevin Goertzen.

Mission Network board chair Lee Smucker

said, "Generally there are different dollars given for brick and mortar than is given for ministry."

Mission Network will continue its feasibility study and make a final decision in July about whether to proceed with the project.

Financial troubles for Mennonite Church USA

Money was clearly on the mind of many Executive Board members, who learned that for the fourth time in four years they would end their fiscal year with a significant budget deficit.

Jim Harder, who chairs the board's resources committee, estimated that the Executive Board's shortfall for the fiscal year ending on Jan. 31 would be about $100,000; that would bring the cumulative shortfall to about $800,000.

"After four years," said Harder, "we're about a quarter smaller than what we were when we founded Mennonite Church USA."

In response to their shrinking budget, the Executive Board agreed to reduce next year's budget by 6 percent and cut the equivalent of two full-time positions.

"Despite our best attempts at collaboration," said Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag, "the parts of the church are locked into what some might say is a natural competition with each other for funding ... a natural selection will take place, and only the fittest will survive."

Schrag noted that when the Executive Board was started in 1999, an agreement stipulated that it would not raise funds for itself but "accept a portion of contributions from four agencies ... [and] from 21 conferences."

At the request of Schrag and the resources committee, the board agreed to launch a major review of the funding system for Mennonite Church USA.

MMA's new presidential search

In other matters, the Executive Board went into a closed session with leaders from MMA to discuss the 2005 presidential search process that ended with MMA's new president resigning after less than two months on the job (see "MMA's New Leader, Nagelvoort, Resigns," Oct. 4, 2005).

Afterward, Executive Board member Ed Rempel reported on the content of the closed session. Rempel said that Curt Bechler, MMA's consultant, "shared background information of the process and highlighted the convergence of a complex set of issues in the search process that led to the CEO termination."

Rempel said that in the new presidential search, which will begin in March, MMA wants to "build trust through a predictable and accountable process."

Relating to Mennonite Church Canada

The Executive Board also received an update about the work of the Joint Executive Committee. The JEC manages the relationship between Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

According to Jack Suderman, Mennonite Church Canada's new general secretary, leaders from both denominations are considering a joint gathering in 2008 for interested members from both sides of the border. The tentative purpose of such a gathering would be for fellowship and worship rather than for doing business.

Suderman also reported that Mennonite Church British Columbia (MCBC) has asked Mennonite Church Canada to make permanent a membership arrangement set to expire in July.

"MCBC requested five years ago that a provisional membership category be established for congregations that wish to be active only in the area conference but not in the national church," Suderman said. "MCBC is interested in continuing that membership category but on an ongoing and not only a provisional basis and providing this option for its congregations."

Suderman said Mennonite Church Canada does not have the authority to mandate to area conferences how they do or do not establish criteria for congregational membership. A task force will review the request and take a proposal to Mennonite Church Canada's general board this spring. Suderman said he hopes the process will result in some recommendations for their national assembly in July.—*Everett J. Thomas*

After four years, [Executive Board's budget is] about a quarter smaller than ... when we founded Mennonite Church USA.
—Jim Harder

Everett J. Thomas

Executive Board and Mennonite Mission Network board members gather around leaders from Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference to pray for them and sing a blessing.

Rituals put God's face, agenda before us

Weddings, funerals and Communion practices focus of AMBS Pastors Week

Mary E. Klassen

Pastors Week presenters John Rempel and Eleanor Kreider are faculty members at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Mennonites have rejected rituals in ways that impoverish our worship and our faith, Arthur Paul Boers said at the beginning of Pastors Week at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 23-26. During the following sessions participants explored ways to give new life to the congregational rituals of baptism, weddings, funerals and Communion.

Boers, who teaches pastoral theology and spiritual formation at AMBS, said that Mennonites have overlooked the priority of rituals as advocated in the Scriptures and written off rich traditions of the church.

"Rituals can convert us," Boers said. "Rituals keep putting God's face and God's agenda and God's priorities before us and call us to be converted. Rituals can bring us before God in ways we are not able to do ourselves."

This set the stage for an in-depth look at symbolic activities that are at the heart of congregational life. Presenters Alan Kreider, Gayle Gerber Koontz, John Rempel and Eleanor Kreider of AMBS and Irma Fast Dueck of Canadian Mennonite University explored biblical, historical and theological background of symbols of faith and invited the participants to share concerns and suggestions.

As Anabaptists, we need to recover baptismal practices that include a vision for the potent change God effects through baptism, Alan Kreider said, emphasizing catechesis as a serious, disciplined preparation for baptism and baptism as a climax in the journey of faith.

"There is a quest for baptismal integrity," he said. "The practice of baptism is getting wetter, getting messier, getting more like birth."

Fast Dueck emphasized the role of the congregation in weddings, saying the service should be a gift from the congregation to the couple.

"We need to be interested in weddings that wed," she said. "In a wedding ceremony we declare that love, fidelity, permanence, self-giving and receiving are possible because of God."

Koontz emphasized that funeral services are worship, echoing what Fast Dueck said about weddings. As we mourn and release the loved one to God we acknowledge several key beliefs: God can be trusted to provide a good future for us, our embodied selves are good and valued by God, salvation is a gift from God, and Jesus modeled hope in resurrection.

In the final presentation on Communion, Rempel and Eleanor Kreider explored the church's history of remembering Jesus' last supper with the disciples.

They proposed that Mennonite churches move toward practicing Communion once a month and emphasize self-examination, confession and accountability in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Rather than opening the Communion celebration to all, they proposed using additional rituals drawn from Communion to extend the symbolism to children and seekers.—*Mary E. Klassen of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

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Choice Books sets another record in 2005

Book evangelism ministry averaged nine book sales per minute last year.

Choice Books, an inter-Anabaptist book evangelism ministry, sets a new annual sales record by purchasing and selling 4,747,040 books in 2005—making 2005 the 20th consecutive year of sales growth. At that rate, Choice Books purchased and sold approximately 395,587 books per month, 13,005 books per day, 542 books per hour and nine books per minute.

From its grass-roots beginnings in 1962, Choice Books' mission has been "to share the good news of Jesus Christ in the general marketplace through inspiring and wholesome reading material."

In 2005, the ministry received hundreds of responses from readers in more than 30 states.

"I believe God is using your company to save and bless lives," one woman from Florida wrote.

"It is so comforting to see your books in places like grocery stores, airports and bus stations," wrote another reader from New York. "It's not always easy to get to a Christian bookstore. I'm thrilled to find your displays in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Thanks for being there for us!"

John Bomberger, Choice Books' CEO, says that "the ministry is always encouraged and blessed to receive reader responses and to know that the books we sell are making a difference in people's lives. Choice Books continues to be amazed by the interest in inspirational books in the general marketplace and the new and diverse display locations God provides."

Each year, Choice Books recognizes the highest retail volume accounts in various retail categories. Choice Books' highest volume account in 2005 was the HMSHost shops at North Carolina's Charlotte/Douglas International Airport, which sold 23,760 books or $252,174 retail from seven displays scattered throughout the airport.

Top volume accounts in other categories were:

Drugstore: Ike's #3, Memphis, Tenn., sold 4,205 books or $36,194 retail from one display.

General merchandise store: Lehman's, Kidron, Ohio, sold 6,845 books or $59,922 retail from three displays.

Hospital gift shop: Veterans Canteen #508, Atlanta V.A. Medical Center, Decatur, Ga., sold 3,757 books or $37,699 retail from one display.

Hotel or motel location: Willow Valley, Lancaster, Pa., sold 2,640 books or $24,552 retail from two displays.

Independent supermarket: Shady Maple Farm Market, East Earl, Pa., sold 1,800 books or $18,001 retail from one display.

Mass merchandise store: Wal-Mart #1717, Waldorf, Md., sold 12,407 books or $81,361 retail from three displays.

Military base facility: AAFES #1030404, Fort Jackson, S.C., sold 11,501 books or $105,862 retail from four displays.

Restaurant location: Das Essenhaus, Middlebury, Ind., sold 6,132 books or $68,492 retail from three displays.

Supermarket chain store: Giant Food #140, Hyattsville, Md., sold 10,256 books or $46,909 retail from two displays.

Travel center store: HMSHost-Maryland House Travel Plaza, Aberdeen, Md., sold 3,132 books or $26,094 retail from one display.

Choice Books operates through a network of eight regional CB Distributors who work cooperatively with a central office in Harrisonburg, Va. The organization employs approximately 225 staff and volunteers and services more than 9,200 displays scattered across the continental United States, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

> **Choice Books continues to be amazed by the interest in inspirational books in the general marketplace.**—John Bomberger

Choice Books sells both English- and Spanish-language inspirational Christian books. Displays can be found in supermarkets, mass merchandise stores, airports, drugstores, travel centers, gift shops, army and air force bases and a variety of other retailers. For more information about Choice Books, please visit their Web site at www.choicebooks.org.—*E. Dale Mast of Choice Books*

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Matthew Lester

Elizabeth Mboye, front right, works in a group of Maasai women who make and sell traditional bead jewelry to support their families.

Women get respect with bead-making

Ten Thousand Villages provides market for hand-crafted tradition.

Elizabeth Mboye used to think that, as a woman, she would never earn an income, but today she is paid for a job she loves to do. Mboye works as a jewelry maker for Namayiana, an association of women artisans in Kenya's rural Rift Valley. Mboye and her colleagues are Maasai—an ethnic group with a proud tradition of making and wearing colorful, beaded necklaces, earrings and other jewelry.

Several afternoons a week, Mboye sits with a dozen other Namayiana artisans in the shade of an acacia tree beside the group's storehouse. They chat and laugh together as they sew beads on leather bracelets and wire ornaments. Sometimes their voices rise in Maasai folksongs.

"I enjoy almost everything about Namayiana," says Mboye, a youthful mother of eight. "I also enjoy working with other women like me."

Namayiana sells some of its products to Ten Thousand Villages, which markets fairly traded international handicrafts in the United States and Canada. Ten Thousand Villages is a program of Mennonite Central Committee, and a handicraft designer serving with MCC in Kenya is helping Namayiana develop some of its products.

Most of Namayiana's 100 members are from families that raise cattle for a living. Traditionally, men tend and sell the cattle, while women work almost exclusively on household chores. By earning money themselves—usually for the first time in their lives—the women of Namayiana are raising their status in their families and communities.

"Instead of asking their husbands or sons to purchase everything, they can also provide," says Catherine Mututua, a local woman who is the manager of Namayiana.

Few of the women have any formal education, but most are using what they earn to buy school supplies and pay school fees for their children.

Mututua says the women chose the name Namayiana—which means "blessing" in the Maasai language—because they considered it a blessing for so many women to work together. In the past, some husbands have been suspicious of all-female gatherings.

"They would call it loitering, wasting time," Mboye says. "In short, he would beat you. ... But things are good these days. Things have changed."

Mboye says her husband now respects the fact that she helps support the family by working for Namayiana. She leaves home more often to work at Namayiana or shop for household needs. However, Mboye is also able to make jewelry for Namayiana at home and still spends much of her time there.

Like most of the women of Namayiana, Mboye was not able to attend school as a girl. Her family's traditional lifestyle required moving from place to place throughout the year to find pasture for cattle. Mboye's father said he loved her too much to leave her at a boarding school.

Today Mboye's income from Namayiana helps her family stay in one place throughout the year. Her younger children attend a primary school nearby, and she sends her older children to a boarding school.

Mboye recognizes that her children need to be prepared to live in a changing world, but she wants them to preserve their Maasai heritage too.

"There are some good things that we will never want to lose," Mboye says.

Among the Maasai traditions Mboye and her husband teach their children are storytelling, caring for animals, singing folk songs and making beaded jewelry for themselves.

"Even the ones I have in boarding school, when they come home, we all sit on the ground to work on beadwork," she says.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

Hamas asks CPT to track detentions

Palestinian Council member says torture 'unthinkable and inconceivable.'

Sheikh Nayef Rajoub, one of Hamas' victorious Hebron-based candidates elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council last month is asking Christian Peacemaker Teams to document Israel's often years-long administrative detention of Palestinians without charge.

"I could provide you with telephone numbers of people in Hebron who have been there whom you can speak to," the Sheikh told CPTers Tracey Hughes, Sis and Jerry Levin.

The three met with him to discuss the implications of Hamas election triumph on CPT's work in the Hebron district.

"There are thousands of Palestinians who have been detained for more than 60 months. They are being tormented daily in ways that are unthinkable and inconceivable," the Sheikh said. "There are more than 1,200 political prisoners being held without charges, without trial."

The treatment, he said, is similar to the abuses of Iraqi detainees by the U.S. military that CPT has been reporting for almost three years.

"In some Israeli detention interrogation centers our young men are chained, handcuffed with their hands behind their backs and with shackles on their feet for seven consecutive days."

The Sheikh also reported that several members of Hamas who were elected to the Legislative Council are still in administrative detention.

"Five are from Hebron," he said. "Some have been there for 14 months."—*Jerry Levin of CPT Hebron*

No change for MCC focus with Hamas

MCC's administrator not worried about strict Islamic laws being introduced.

The election of the Hamas militant group in Palestine is not expected to have any impact on the work of Mennonite Central Committee in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Alain Epp Weaver, who heads up MCC's work in Palestine, Jordan and Iraq, says it is unlikely that MCC staff and their partner organizations will face greater restrictions under the new government. Neither will the focus of MCCs work change.

But in an email interview from Amman, Jordan, last month, Epp Weaver pointed out that it is the long-standing policies of Israel that will continue to harm MCC partners, not the emergence of a new governing party in Palestine.

"For months prior to the election, Israel had instituted a policy that basically prevented travel for most Palestinians between the north and the south of the West Bank," he said, adding that Israel will simply continue ratcheting up the barriers to travel between isolated West Bank areas. "This was going ahead regardless of who won the election."

Epp Weaver is also skeptical about fears in some quarters that Hamas will introduce strict Islamic laws (see sidebar on this page).

"At present, MCC's Christian partners are not terribly concerned about increased restrictions," he said.

While Hamas won a clear majority of seats in government, its percentage of the popular vote—at 46 percent—was not an emphatic endorsement. According to Epp Weaver, Hamas recognizes that the victory is primarily about "the public's disgust with Fatah corruption and disorder and with the fact that the years of the Oslo process have brought nothing but greater ghettoization."

The election had little or nothing to do with any vision of an Islamicized public sphere. And while Palestinians are concerned about international isolation, this is not a new worry. They have long been isolated.

"Israel has been treating the Palestinian Authority as a 'nonpartner' for many years now. Now Hamas will be the 'nonpartner' instead of Fatah," Epp Weaver said.—*Carol Thiessen, a freelance writer*

Hamas

Hamas won 76 of 132 seats in the Palestinian government in the Jan. 25 election, replacing the Fatah party that had long dominated Palestinian politics. Since the election, North American media have focused on Hamas' links to violence, its refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the state of Israel and its potential to introduce stricter Islamic laws to Palestine.—*MCC*

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Former first lady visits Nazareth Village

Shirley Roth succeeds D. Michael Hostetler as director of the mission project.

Several years ago, during the height of the armed intifada in Israel and Palestine, a worker arrived at Nazareth Village one morning to find all the sheep had been lost. A gift from Rosalynn and Jimmy Carter allowed the village to purchase more animals.

In January, Rosalynn Carter finally had a chance to see the lambs that were, if not found, at least replaced. On Jan. 26, villagers in authentic costumes were hoeing around olive trees as the farmer worked his way through a flock of sheep to carry a newborn lamb toward the former first lady. The Carter family and entourage were enthralled, and stroked its silky white face. Even the security service personnel pressed closer.

"This is one of the offspring of your sheep," the village farmer told Carter. "Your donation for replacements helped us get started again. We've recently added two new sets of twins and two more singles."

Carter was delighted, having briefly forgotten about that earlier gift at a time of urgent need, when the intifada had reduced international visitors to a trickle.

Shirley Roth, Nazareth Village's new director, said sheep were vital to the operation of the village, which re-creates a first-century Nazareth setting.

"Sheep were essential animals for life in the first century—milk products such as cheese, butter, tallow for cooking, wool spun and woven into clothes, meat for feast days and special celebrations," Roth said.

"It makes me feel like I'm right in a biblical setting," said Carter, who visited the village with her daughter Amy and son Jeff—her first visit to the site she has supported for years and currently serves, along with her husband, as an honorary trustee.

While her husband, President Jimmy Carter, was pressed with supervisory follow-up to the Palestinian elections through the organizational work of the Carter Center, the rest of the family got up early for the two-hour ride from Jerusalem to Nazareth, then rushed back again in time for a late-morning briefing on the elections.

"I'm so glad I could be included in this visit," Amy Carter told Roth. "It was really worthwhile to make the trip—even in the rain."

Accompanied by Nazareth Mayor Ramez Jaraisy and members of the village's board of directors, they walked along the pathway through the farm, climbing between the terraces of vineyards and up to the only existing reconstructed first-century synagogue of Jesus' time.

This light reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. [We] invite you to help us share this light with others. —Amer

Nazareth Village

Nazareth Village volunteer Steve Steiner shows a lamb to, from left, Nazareth Mayor Ramez Jaraisy and former first lady Rosalynn Carter during their visit to the village Jan. 26.

The group stopped by one of the village houses for a brief demonstration of domestic Jewish life under the Romans of that time. Hot herbal tea taken on stools around a low table, olives and cucumbers, hummus and zatar (thyme) to dip the hot flat bread just baked atop an outdoor fire near the well in the courtyard—the setting could have been typical of Mary and Joseph's own home thought to be just 500 meters away in this ancient Galilean town.

"The Parable Walk was so meaningful for me," said Rosalynn Carter as they moved down the hill toward the exit. "It makes the Scriptures come alive in a new way."

In the dark room that ends the tour, lit only by the flickering oil lamps copied from Jesus' time, the guide Amer reminded the VIP group about the whole mission of the village. He held up the lamp to let the flame light Carter's face.

"This light reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world," he told her, passing out the lamps to each member of the group. "[We] invite you to help us share this light with others."

Nazareth Village is supported by individuals from around the world and by contributions made through Mennonite Mission Network.

Roth, recently named director of Nazareth Village, succeeds D. Michael Hostetler, who, with his wife, Virginia, and family, moved to Kitchener, Ont., for two years of speaking with churches, institutions and community groups about the Nazareth Village international mission and vision.—*Glenn Edward Witmer of Mennonite Mission Network*

Reconciliation leads to celebration

Eastern Mennonite Missions workers call meeting of dissenting leaders.

Cindy Kreider

Women celebrate the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Mennonite church in Lucre, Peru, by throwing confetti.

Last year, Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) missionaries John and Cindy Kreider stepped in to pastor the Mennonite church in Lucre, Peru, a picturesque mountain village of about 500 families.

The church had been without a pastor for two years and was floundering as a rift between two church leaders widened. Attendance dwindled to 25-30.

The Kreiders began meeting weekly with the leaders and training cell group leaders but soon realized they couldn't ignore the simmering conflict. They called a meeting of the leaders of the two dissenting sides. Miraculously, the leaders reconciled with one another—giving the church a new lease on life.

Fresh creativity began to flow, and the church decided to celebrate its 15th birthday by throwing a party for the whole community. Church members welcomed visitors with hot drinks and fresh bread. The worship team played, and John preached a short evangelistic sermon.

Emiliano, one of the first believers in Lucre, told how he and several others from Lucre met God 15 years ago while panning for gold out in the jungle. They came home to Lucre and invited EMM workers to help plant a church in their village.

After the worship service, celebrations continued with firecrackers, hugs all around and handfuls of confetti in everyone's hair. There were plays, baptisms and large portions of noodles, baked potatoes and chicken for everyone.

The day concluded with piñatas for the more than 50 children, and volleyball and soccer for the youth and adults.

"We felt like many walls came down," Cindy says, "and there were a lot of relationships built in the community."

God continues to work. The Kreiders told of amazing personal transformation in the life of one Lucre church leader.

"She had come to church for months but never looked us in the eye," Cindy says. "At 8 years of age, she'd had an incestuous relationship with an older brother. Since then her life had been a jumble of broken relationships, children and abortions. She'd even attempted suicide. When we prayed for her, she heard voices telling her to leave. But she persisted, repented of her sins, forgave those who had sinned against her and renounced the strongholds in her life. She came away free in Christ. Now people talk about how different she is, and she looks us in the eye."

We felt like many walls came down, and there were a lot of relationships built in the community.—Cindy Kreider

—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Congolese forge relations with MC USA

Initiative began at MWC's gathering in 2003 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Six church leaders from two Congolese Mennonite conferences plan to visit Mennonite Church USA congregations and institutions in March as a part of an ongoing church-to-church initiative.

They expect to be among more than 200 people from around the world participating in the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) mini-assembly in Pasadena, Calif., March 9-16.

From March 17 to 27, the Congolese leaders anticipate being guests of congregations in Kansas, the Chicago area, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) is working with MWC in planning these visits.

"It seems increasingly important for us to forge strong relationships with brothers and sisters in the global church. Their perspectives and experiences are critical to us as we seek to be faithful," says Andre Gingerich Stoner, pastor of missions at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind.

At Mennonite World Conference's assembly in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in 2003, Mennonite Church USA, the Congo Mennonite Church and the Congo Evangelical Mennonite Church began exploring church-to-church relationships.

Since then, leaders from the three conferences have met several times, says MWC staff person Timothy Lind.

MWC's Global Church Congregations program—developed to allow North American congregations to help bring delegates from the global south to the Pasadena meetings—provided a framework for planning the visit. Coming from Congo are Lambertine Mumbanda Fuemba, Claude Katutshi, Adolphe Komuesa, Benjamin Mubenga, Mathieu Shimatu and Sidonie Swana.

Congregations in northern Indiana, western Ohio and southwest Michigan plan to host the six Congolese leaders March 22–27. At least five of these churches have each contributed $1,000 or more toward travel costs for the Congolese leaders' trip to the MWC meetings and church visits. Three of the congregations are also sending congregational observers to Pasadena.

The host churches have strong connections to Congo. More than a dozen people from these churches have been AIMM workers in Congo, and numerous others have served there under Mennonite Central Committee.

During their visit to Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, the Congolese leaders will speak at Sunday worship services, attend midweek fellowship events, share group meals and AIMM "family" gatherings. They will also visit Mennonite institutions in Indiana such as Associate Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Goshen College, the Greencroft retirement community in Goshen, Mennohof in Shipshewana and other mission and service programs.

Other plans include public events for sharing visions and practical ideas on how Mennonites in Africa and the United States can build stronger long-term relationships.

"We feel it is a real opportunity, not only for American Mennonites to become more familiar with the largest national concentration of Mennonites outside the United States, but also for all levels of our church to participate directly in shaping a new and exciting global relationship. The ideas and visions of congregations are an essential ingredient in this process," says Lind, who has been a key planner of the venture.
—Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference

It is a real opportunity … for all levels of our church to participate directly in shaping a new and exciting global relationship.—Tim Lind

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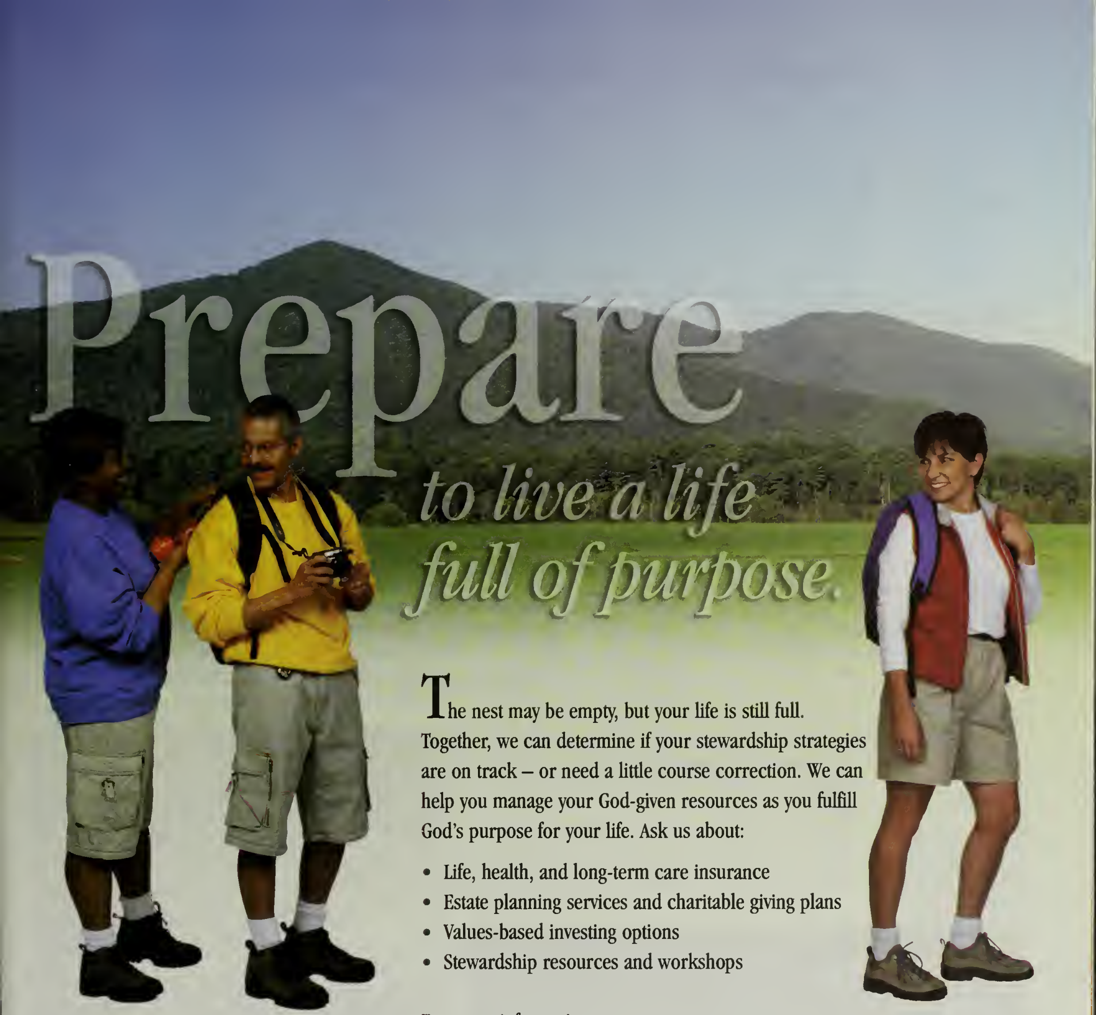

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Conflict resolution reaches Ethiopia

Evangelist calls for help after one-day massacre, violence in countryside.

Last September, Amanuel Sigebo, a 35-year-old Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) evangelist, took his conflict resolution training home. Twenty months earlier he had phoned contacts in Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa, pleading for help. Ethnic tensions in his region on the Sudan border had erupted into a one-day massacre in the city and ongoing violence in the countryside.

Over time, the situation stabilized, but there was still widespread distrust and fear—the seeds of future violence—and Christians recognized that they were not exempt from this threat.

In response, leaders from the Mennonite Mission in Ethiopia—a joint effort of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Mennonite Central Committee—recommended Amanuel for an MCC scholarship to the Africa Peace Institute, hoping that the six-week training in May and June 2005 would give him tools to address the everyday tensions in his home region.

The result: a conflict resolution workshop in Gambela Sept. 1-4, 2005, with some funding help from a partnership between Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE) and Mennonite Mission in Ethiopia. Amanuel facilitated the four-day workshop with three colleagues: fellow Africa Peace Institute participant Temesgen Nagosh of Jimma; Mekonnen Dessalegn, MCC programs coordinator; and Sileshi Kebede, assistant general secretary of ECFE.

Participants included 24 government workers from Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic and evangelical backgrounds, an army officer, an official from the Ministry of Justice, a representative of the ruling party and 60 church leaders from 10 different ethnic and language groups.

The four trainers were conscientious about reaching out to each participant, and about using biblical examples with sensitivity to the different groups present.

"There are many ways we can learn from Scripture," an Orthodox priest said at the conclusion.

A Muslim participant said he had expected to feel alienated but had instead felt a common basis for working together for peace.

The army officer said the workshop broadened his exposure to different points of view, including the "shalom" sense of peace, encompassing health, nature, and relationships with family, neighbors and the world.

Amanuel is in demand from other organizations as he blends his recent peace training with his work as an MKC evangelist.

Church leaders express appreciation to Mennonites in North America for helping to fund the Gambela workshop.—*Holly Blosser Yoder for MCC and EMM*

[Ethiopian] church leaders express appreciation to Mennonites in North America for helping fund the Gambela workshop. —Holly Blosser Yoder

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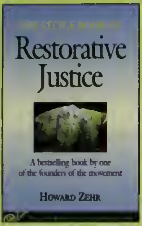
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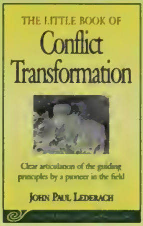
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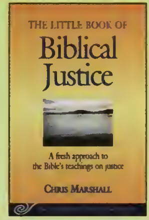
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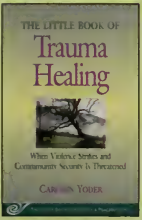
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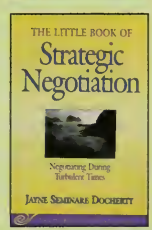
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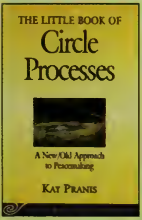
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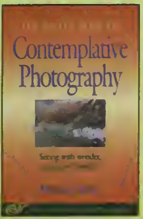
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"Farming with Values that Last 2006: Models for the Journey," Feb. 24-26, 2006, **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center**, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. Join people of faith gathering to share experiences and celebrate the opportunities within community-based sustainable agriculture. Workshops, worship, commercial exhibits, music, storytelling. David Kline, nature writer and Ohio organic dairy farmer, keynote speaker. Workshops on production, creating marketing relationships, public policy, faith community education, wind/renewable energy. Contact: Cheryl Paulovich, cheryl@laurelville.org, 800-839-1021, www.laurelville.org.

Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change, March 30-April 1, North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio. Sponsored by **Ohio Conference Evangelism Commission**. Download the brochure at www.ohio.mennonite.net for complete information and registration form.

WORKERS

King, John, ended Jan. 15 as pastor at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Kratz, Dorothy, ended Dec. 31, 2005, as pastor at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bishota, Caden Kamugisha, Jan. 28, to Charles and Misty Waltner Bishota, Wichita, Kan.

Brown, Carson Michael, Jan. 27, to Cory and Melinda Birky Brown, Shipshewana, Ind.

Crockett, Easton Kyle, Jan. 3, to Will and Cassie Blauch Crockett, Bridgewater, Va.

Dorsing, Trevor Leslie, Jan. 14, to Kevin and Wanda Zimmerman Dorsing, Royal City, Wash.

Gascho III, Joseph Alvin, Dec. 5, 2005, to Joe and Elena Tsai Gascho, Columbia, Md.

Groff, Sadie Moyer, Jan. 27, to Jamey and Gen Moyer Groff, Harrisonburg, Va.

Harris, Emmett Johnathan, Dec. 30, 2005, to Luke and Amber Nelson Harris, Salem, Ore.

Hartzler, Abigail Rae, Jan. 25, to Matthew and Jennifer Hartzler, Louisville, Ohio.

Heidebrecht, Jesse Ezra Brubacher, Dec. 12, 2005, to Paul Heidebrecht and Carmen Brubacher, Wauwatosa, Wis.

Herris, Noelle Ashley, Dec. 14, 2005, to Keith and Melissa Herris, Battle Creek, Mich.

Hochstedler, Justin Daniel, Dec. 28, 2005, to Rex and Angie Nofziger Hochstedler, Goshen, Ind.

Lepard, Markus Jarret, Jan. 30, to Alan and Sheri Bartel Lepard, Newton, Kan.

Mast, Naomi Laurel, Dec. 2, to John Mast and Susan L. Hochstedler, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Meyer, Brodie Lee, Jan. 25, to Ryan and Heather Peitz Meyer, Iowa City, Iowa.

Morris, Regan Olivia, Jan. 17, to Steve and Sharon Faul Morris, Hutchinson, Kan.

Murch, Nicholas Aiden, Feb. 3, to John and Jennifer Murch, Harrisonburg, Va.

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Schlabach, Holden Wayne, Jan. 11, to Brad and Amy Wiseman Schlabach, Sarasota, Fla.

Schrag, Ava Joleen, Nov. 6, 2005, to Myles Schrag and Shelley Smithson, Urbana, Ill.

Schrag, Soren Wei Kang, Jan. 3, to David Schrag and Tina Huang, Easton, Pa.

Schrock, Rachel Elizabeth, Dec. 5, 2005, to Steve Schrock and Kim Stuckey, Goshen, Ind.

Spallinger, Julian, Dec. 3, 2005, to Steve and Amy Spallinger, Valparaiso, Ind.

Slabach, Juliana Lyn, Dec. 22, 2005, to Doug and Dawn Dillon Slabach, Middlebury, Ind.

Weaver, Samuel, Nov. 30, 2003, received for adoption Dec. 19, 2005 by Michael and Leslie Weaver, Valparaiso, Ind.

Yoder, Andy Ray, Nov. 3, 2005, to Jason and Lindsey Yoder, Plain City, Ohio.

Yoder, John-Paul Nyce, Nov. 8, 2005, to J.D. Yoder and Lynda Nyce, Bluffton, Ohio.

MARRIAGES

Basinger/Mumaw: Clair L. Basinger, Harrisonburg, Va., and Catherine R. Mumaw, Corvallis, Ore., Oct. 14, 2005, in Corvallis.

Begly/Gerardy: Amanda Begly, Tiskilwa, Ill., and Darrin Gerardy, Eldridge, Iowa, Nov. 7, 2005, at Willow Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa.

Boldt/Perez: Daniel Boldt, Reedley, Calif., and Dolores Perez, Reedley, Jan. 7 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Emswile/Mturi: Jan Odele Emswile, Muguma Tanzania, and Kajunga Mturi, Muguma, Jan. 7.

Nolt/Reist: Sarah Nolt, Ephrata, Pa., and Josh Reist, Ephrata, Feb. 4 at Trinity Evangelical Congregational Church, Landisville, Pa.

Suter/Wiebe: Emily Suter, Bluffton, Ohio, and Jonathan Wiebe, Newton, Kan., Dec. 31, 2005, at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

DEATHS

Correction: In the Jan. 10 issue, Esther Histand's children were incorrectly listed. Esther's children are D. Merrill Histand and Marie Hackman. She has 11 great-grandchildren.

Balzer, Gladys Unger, 90, Hesson, Kan., died Feb. 3. Spouse: Elmer Dewey Balzer (deceased). Parents: P.N. and Mary Seibel Unger. Children: Barbara, Francis; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 6 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Davidhizar-Schneider, Kathryn Blough, 91, Jerome, Pa., died Dec. 15, 2005, of heart failure. Spouse: Joseph LaVerne (deceased). Parents: John E. and Minnie M. Blough. Children: Janice Apple, Elvin Davidhizar, Kitty Ovieda, Carolyn Metzgar, John Davidhizar; 14 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 19, 2005, at Thomas Mennonite church, Holsopple, Pa.

Davis, Stephen Paul, 52, Syracuse, Ind., died Jan. 11 of glioblastoma mulitforme brain tumor. Spouse: Shrieen DeeAnn Davis. Parents: John and Lois Mae Davis. Children: Stephenie Boesenberg, Shaundra. Funeral: Jan. 14 at Calvary United Methodist Church, Syracuse.

Dyck, Lois Bartel, 78, Bluffton, Ohio, died Dec. 8, 2005. Spouse: Paul Dyck. Parents: Hugo O. and Marie Funk Bartel. Children: Rodney, Curtis Weaver-Dyck, Martin Dysrt, Doris Bartel; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12, 2005, at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Fisher, Virginia Heppner, 82, Reedley, Calif., died Dec. 11, 2005. Spouse: Robert L. Fisher (deceased). Parents: Cornelius and Helen Schultz Heppner. Children: Janet Hauge, Gayle Janzen, Bob Fisher; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 15 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif.

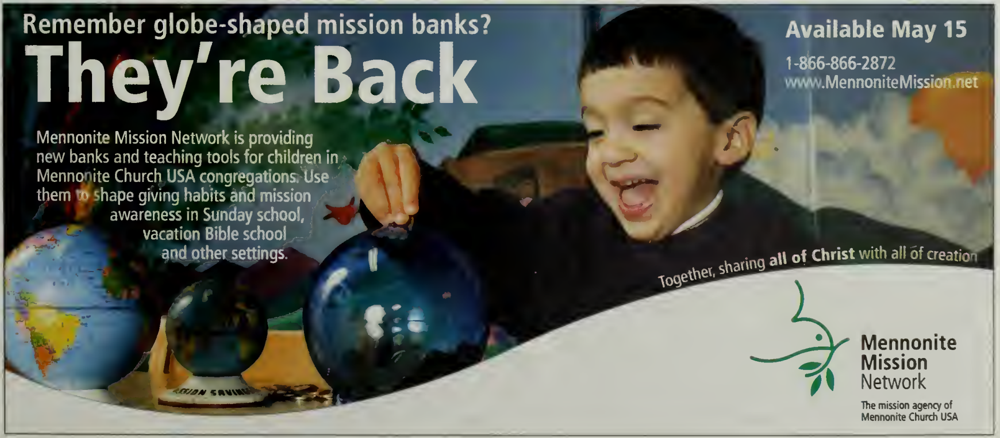
Geiser, Paul, 88, Bluffton, Ohio, died Jan. 5. Spouse: Marie Ewing Geiser. Parents: John and Clara Gratz Geiser. Children: Ronald, John. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Chiles and Sons Laman Funeral Home, Lima, Ohio.

Gingerich, Velma Eash, 91, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 27. Spouse: Truman Walter Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Isaac and Barbara Swarzendruber Eash. Children: Gilbert, Wallace, Jerry Lee; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Gingrich, Perceda Reist, 87, Cambridge, Ont., died Jan. 22. Spouse: Jesse Gingrich (deceased). Parents: Moses and Lydia Reist. Children: Merle, David, Grace Brubacher, Jean Martin; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 25 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Goertz, Harry J., 61, Granger, Ind., died Jan. 23. Spouse: Laura Strefling Goertz. Parents: Peter I. and Elizabeth Schmidt Goertz. Child: Chad; step-children Rebecca Savage, Teresa Breiler, Matthew Strefling; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Elkhart, Ind.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.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Good, Wilmer, 88, Kouts, Ind., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Lilah Good. Parents: Joseph and Anna Martin Good. Children: Shirley, Ron, Mark, Steve; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 16 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts.

Greenwalt, Naomi Fogelsonger, 91, Grandville, Mich., died Dec. 29, 2005. Spouse: Leon Greenwalt (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Ruth Whitehead Milton. Children: Janet Idema, Allan Fisher; three grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31, 2005, at Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, Goshen, Ind.

Hess, Rhoda M., 87, Lancaster, Pa., died Jan. 27. Spouse: Henry L. Hess (deceased). Parents: Aaron K. and Edna Mae Metzler Becker. Children: James H., Lois Smoker, Shirley Hurst, Doris Rodriguez; 13 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Elizabethtown (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

King, Leonard John, 84, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 14. Spouse: (1st) Bessie Schmucker (deceased), (2nd) Lois Grieser Thierry Myers. Parents: Clarence L. and Emma Wyse King. Children: James, Rodney, Pat, Linda Bennett; step-children Keith Thierry, Doug Thierry, Max Thierry, Jeffery Thierry; 18 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Kraybill, Orpha Erb, 95, Elizabethtown, Pa., died Jan. 7. Spouse: Norman R. Kraybill (deceased). Parents: David and Minnie Witmer Erb. Children: Harold E., Helen L. Miller, Herbert E.; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Elizabethtown (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Landis, Irene (Reenie) Bear, 72, Manheim, Pa., died Jan. 23. Parents: John and Alta Rohrer Bear. Children: Diane J. Wilson, Bobbe S. Sauder, James O.; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 28 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Leaman, Anna S. Heller, 89, Lititz, Pa., died Jan. 16. Spouse: D. Rohrer Leaman (deceased). Parents: Harlan and Florence Martin Heller. Children: Robert H., Doris J. Kready, John M., Velma A.; 15 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa.

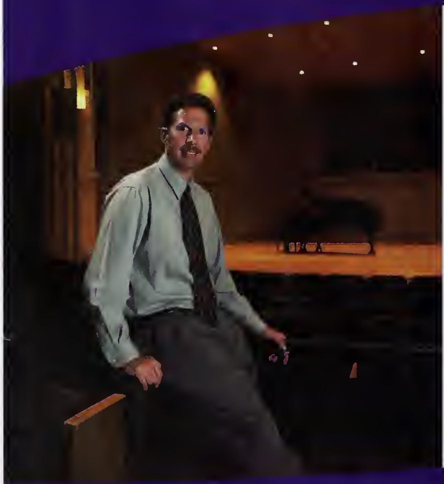
Lee, Lawrence Edward, 78, Elida, Ohio, died Jan. 19. Spouse: Naomi Moyer Lee. Parents: Kenneth and Esther Weldon Lee. Children: Emily, Jake. Funeral: Jan. 23 at Pike Mennonite Church, Allen, Ohio.

Miller, Louella, 71, Middlebury, Ind., died Jan. 14. Spouse: Raymond (Jack) Miller (deceased). Parents: Olen and Edna Miller. Children: Lucinda Slagel, Roger, Jeri Roggelien, Gregori; eight grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Nafziger, Freeman A., 82, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 27. Spouse: Marian Christner. Parents: Alfred and Ruth Eicher Nafziger. Children: Roger, Charles, Ron, Charlotte Stepp; seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 31 at Tedrow (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Nice, Luella Mae, 84, McMinnville, Ore., died Dec. 14, 2005, from complications of diabetes and polymagia. Spouse: Howard Fred Nice. Parents: Hugh and Lillie Wolfer Schrag. Children: Marlene Kropf, Judi Jones, Loren, Gary, Dennis, Douglas; 14 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 19, 2005, at Church on the Hill, McMinnville, Ore.

Noftsier, Judson R., 74, Lowville, N.Y., died Jan. 27. Spouse: Alta Lyndaker Noftsier. Parents: Romeyn and Laura Moser Noftsier. Children: Marcelle, Wanda Smith; one grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 31 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville.



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Reinford, Nelson, 85, Mount Pleasant Mills, Pa., died Jan. 26. Spouse: Mary Leatherman Reinford (deceased). Parents: Norman S. and Mary Landes Reinford. Children: Clyde, Vernon, Ralph, Carl, Lorraine Freed, Lois, Fern Landis, Ruth Ann; 27 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at Boyer Mennonite Church, Middleburg, Pa.

Rufenacht, Maynard E., 83, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 21. Spouse: (1st) Elverda Nofziger Rufenacht (deceased), (2nd) Bernice Nofziger Rufenacht. Parents: Elias and Louisa Aschliman Rufenacht. Children: Jean Hartzler, Jim, Corwin, Terry, Lonnie; 11 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 25 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Rychener, Duane A., 63, Boise, Idaho, died Jan. 21 of cancer. Spouse: Rachel Porter Rychener. Parents: Carl and Lucille Beck Rychener. Children: Terry, Pamela Petersen; four grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 27 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Sensenig, Blanche Mae, 92, Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 15, 2005. Spouse: Daniel S. Sensenig (deceased). Parents: Levi and Martha Brackbill Weaver. Children: Janice, Daniel; three grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 17, 2005 at New Holland (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Silva, Armida N., 75, Reedley, Calif., died Jan. 24. Parents: Joe and Antonio Silva. Children: Anthony Vizcarra, Veronika Vizcarra, Gloria Banuelos, Missy Victoria; 12 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Stalter, Timothy W., 91, Pigeon, Mich., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Daisy Miller Stalter. Parents: Christian and Salome Good Stalter. Children: Darwin, Delton, Gary, Randy; 12 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 2 at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Troyer, Alvin D., 88, Plain City, Ohio, died Jan. 17. Spouse: Mary Yoder Troyer. Parents: Daniel and Mary Frey Troyer. Children: Robert, James, Charlene Byers; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Unruh, Evelyn Buller, 86, Newton, Kan., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Vernard Wilbur Unruh (deceased). Parents: David and Sarah Kroeker Buller. Children: Roger, Marilyn Johnson, Gregory; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Wagler, Earles A., 85, Pettisville, Ohio, died Feb. 1. Spouse: Myrtie Lugbill Wagler. Parents: John and Ada Hirschey Wagler. Children: Richard, Bob, John, Tom, Curtis, Tim, Chris, Gloria Johnson, Mary Beth Schumm; 16 grandchildren; four step-grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 4 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Willems, Ruthanna Enns, 83, Inman, Kan., died Jan. 4 of a stroke. Children: Jerry, Dennis, Dick; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 9 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Wyse, Ivan L. "Sparks", 79, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 27. Spouse: Martha Borton. Parents: Jesse and Anna Short Wyse. Children: Rex, Jan Stevens, Jill Wyse, Rachel Grieser, Kasey Grime, Bruce (deceased), Pamela (deceased); 10 grandchildren; four step-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Evangelical Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Yoder, Alta Mae, 95, Carlsbad, N.M., died Jan. 22 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Sylvan M. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Andrew and Soloma Stauffer Miller. Children: Lillian Miller, Roline Swartzendruber, Laura Rhodes, Dennis, Norman; 11 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Carlsbad Mennonite Church.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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If you don't currently receive the magazine but would like to consider it for small group discussions, call us for a trial issue or request one through our Web site.

TheMennonite www.TheMennonite.org 800-790-2498

Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church is seeking candidates for a current open position of full-time ***youth minister***. The youth minister gives pastoral leadership to a group of 50+ high-school-age students. Candidates should have a growing passion for their faith in Jesus, love of youth and the ability to lead a team of eight volunteer sponsors. The candidate would be part of a team of four other pastors. A bachelor's degree in youth ministries is preferred. Interested people should send a resume to Tom Kauffman, Franconia Mennonite Church, 613 Harleysville Pike, Telford, PA 18969.

Plow Creek Fellowship seeks people for ***internship***. Exploring areas of intentional Christian community, appropriate technology, peace and justice issues. 19183 Plow Creek, Tiskilwa, IL 61368, 815-646-4529, erinirene8@yahoo.com.

***Chaplain*: Sunnyside Village**, Sarasota, Fla., is seeking applications for full-time chaplain providing leadership in spiritual care/counseling for residents of Sunnyside Nursing Home, Manor/ALF and Village's independent living retirement community. Applicant should be trained in pastoral care, clinical pastoral education, enjoy working with older adults. If not certified, must be working toward certification. Applicant must maintain qualities of Christian faith, willingness to work program from a Mennonite Perspective. Responsibilities include planning all worship services, relating one-on-one, small group Bible study, sharing, relating to area Mennonite churches, hospital visitation, providing spiritual care perspective on management team, assisting in grief/caregiver support. Fax resumé/references to 941-377-2571. Interviews begin immediately; April 1 start date.

Eastern Mennonite University announces faculty openings beginning Fall 2006.

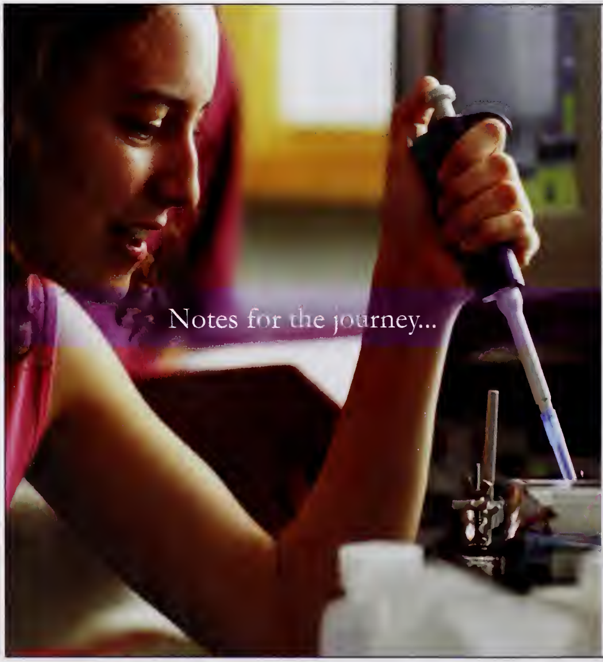
Biology: Full-time, continuing faculty position in biomedical sciences. Ph.D. preferred, A.B.D. considered. Responsibilities include teaching human anatomy and physiology and additional courses that may include microbiology, introductory biology courses and a course in the candidate's specialty.

Nursing: Full-time, continuing faculty position in nursing. Ph.D. in nursing or other terminal degree preferred; master's degree acceptable. Responsibilities include teaching classes in fundamentals and adult health nursing or adult health and obstetrics, and supervising clinical experiences. Adjunct position in adult health also available.

Theater: Full-time, one-year faculty position in theater. MFA in acting or directing. University teaching or professional experience required. Primary responsibilities are teaching performance-related theater courses and directing departmental production. Applicants should embrace the opportunity to continue building a young theater department that seeks adventurous, socially engaged theater, with a particular emphasis placed on innovative teaching and expansion of the traditional performance canon.

Responsibilities for each position also include student advising, university service and ongoing scholarship.

EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email ugdean@emu.edu. Visit www.emu.edu online. Application review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the positions at any time or keep the positions open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.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GOSHEN COLLEGE

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Walnut Hills is a privately owned, continuing-care retirement community that offers four lifestyles (skilled nursing, assisted living, catered living, independent living) to 250 residents in the middle of Ohio's Amish community since 1971. Interested people should contact David A. Miller, President, at 330-893-3200 or www.WalnutHillsLiving.com.

MMA: ***insurance and financial services sales***

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Full-Time lead minister. **Waterloo North Mennonite Church** in Waterloo, Ont., is a dynamic, urban, multigenerational congregation with an average attendance of 250. Responsibilities include leading a ministry team that includes the associate minister (staff) and three lay ministers. The successful candidate will have a Master of Divinity, a commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, pastoral leadership experience and will be gifted in preaching, administration and pastoral care.

Apply by March 15 to: Waterloo North Mennonite Church, c/o Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister, 4489 King St. East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2. Phone 519-650-3806. Email muriel@mcec.ca

Goshen College invites nominations and applications for the position of ***vice president for institutional advancement***. A successful and experienced professional is sought to lead this well-established and historically productive advancement program. The vice president for institutional advancement is the chief development officer of the college reporting directly to the president and is a member of the President's Council.

For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania seeks a ***director of development*** to provide leadership in the areas of church and community relations, fund-raising and membership growth. Responsibilities include organization and management of a development program, donor and contact information, coordinating public relations activities and fund-raising events, building relationships with members, churches and donors. See full job description at www.mhep.org. Interested candidates should send their resumé to Sarah Heffner, Director, MHEP, P.O. Box 82, Harleysville, PA 19438 or sarahh@mhep.org.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

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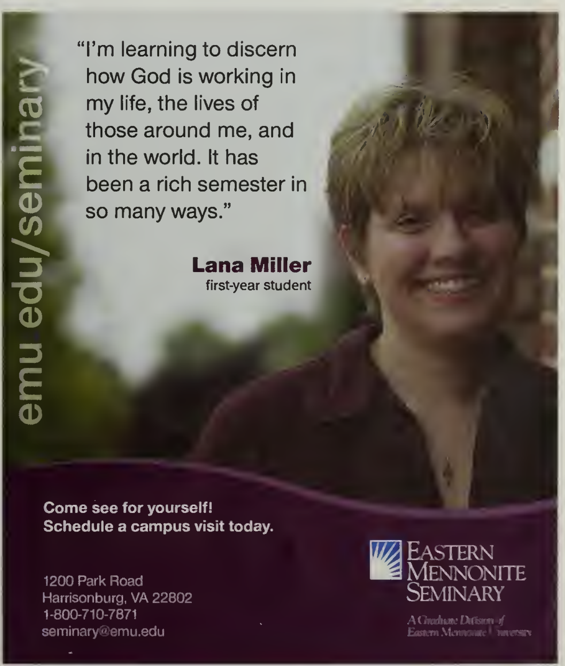

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The poison at my fingertips

Gordon Houser

The earth's life support systems will probably survive the automobile but probably not personal computers.
—Environmental Protection Agency worker

While many debate global warming (see below) and the effects on the earth of our addiction to automobiles, most of us are unaware of a more destructive addiction: using computers.

I write this on a personal computer that to make required nearly 10 times its weight in chemicals (many of them toxic) and fossil fuels. *National Catholic Reporter* writer Rich Heffern addresses this alarming reality in his Earth & Spirit column (Jan. 27). He points out that the short life of today's electronic equipment leads to mountains of waste "that is then dumped into landfills or recycled, too often in poorly managed facilities in developing countries, leading to significant health risks."

A United Nations University study released in 2005 shows that "the manufacture of a 24-kilogram personal computer with a Pentium III processor and a 17-inch monitor needs at least 240 kilograms of fossil fuels to provide the energy, and 22 kilograms of chemicals. Add 1.5 tons of water, and your desktop has used up the weight of an SUV in materials before it even leaves the factory."

While the computer itself uses little energy, making it uses a lot. According to Ted Smith, director of the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition: "The overall demand of a typical chip plant is equivalent to the energy used by a city with 80,000 people." These plants produce about 130 million new computers every year.

While computers are important tools in our work, we need to find ways to extend their life. Eric Williams, the U.N. report's co-author, recommends that users "think carefully about whether they really need to buy a new computer, if upgrading the existing machine could serve the same purpose. Promptly selling old machines to the used-product market is also important."

Global warming: Meanwhile, 86 evangelical leaders are backing a major initiative to fight global warming, saying "millions of people could die in this century because of climate change, most of them our poorest global neighbors."

Among signers of the statement, released Feb. 8, are the presidents of 39 evangelical colleges, leaders of aid groups and churches, such as the Salvation Army, and pastors of megachurches, including Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose-Driven Life*. The list also includes prominent black leaders such as Bishop Charles E. Blake Sr. of the West Angeles Church of God in Christ in Los Angeles, the Rev. Floyd Flake of the Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral in New York City, and Bishop Wellington Boone of the Father's House and Wellington Boone Ministries in Norcross, Ga.; and Hispanic leaders such as the Rev. Jesse Miranda, president of AMEN in Costa Mesa, Calif.

"For most of us, until recently this has not been treated as a pressing issue or major priority," the statement said. "Indeed, many of us have required considerable convincing before becoming persuaded that climate change is a real problem and that it ought to matter to us as Christians."

Twenty-two high-profile evangelical leaders, however, signed a letter in January declaring, "Global warming is not a consensus issue." Among the signers were Charles W. Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries; James C. Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family; and Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In all of this, I suspect, computers were used.

BEST FILMS OF 2005

1. **Capote**
2. **Brokeback Mountain**
3. **Good Night and Good Luck**
4. **Crash**
5. **Junebug**
6. **Grizzly Man**
7. **Syriana**
8. **Munich**
9. **The Squid and the Whale**
10. **Downfall**

FILMS

End of the Spear (PG-13) is based on the true story of the Waodani tribe in Ecuador who killed one another with spears out of vengeance. One girl in the tribe, Dayumae, flees to the foreigners and becomes a Christian. Later, in 1956, five U.S. missionaries, including Nate Saint, attempt to contact the tribe and are killed. Dayumae, Nate's sister Rachel and others go live with the tribe and introduce them to the God whose Son was speared but didn't spear back. This is a powerful story but hindered by a simplistic script and melodramatic music. Check out the documentary DVD *Beyond Gates of Splendor.*

BOOKS

With the growth of Islam (1.3 billion Muslims worldwide), we need to have a better understanding of this faith than most of us do. Two recent books help us. **Anabaptists Meeting Muslims: A Calling for Presence in the Way of Christ**, edited by James R. Krabill, David W. Shenk and Linford Stutzman (Herald Press, 2005, $24.99), is a large book, with 42 essays and nine appendices, that grew out of "An Anabaptist Consultation on Islam" in 2003. The essays range from theoretical treatises to personal narratives. Lamin Sanneh notes the clash between the West's "prescriptive secularism" and Muslim's certainty that they possess "infallible truth." The problem, he concludes, is "whether we can devise effective and credible arrangements for a world order committed to reconciliation." The book calls the church "to engage in a ministry of respectful presence, listening and witness among Muslims. A more intimate, accessible book is **Meeting Islam: A Guide for Christians** by George Dardess (Paraclete Press, 2005, $14.95). He describes learning Arabic, then the Qur'an, from a local Islamic Center. A Catholic deacon, Dardess writes that learning Islam helped him become a better Christian.

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Instituto Biblico Anabautista coordinator Esther Martinez stands in a classroom with IBA students at the program's Dallas center.

Instituto Biblico Anabautista: Building confidence. Building leaders.

"What does it mean to be a Mennonite?" It's a question asked and answered in Instituto Biblico Anabautista (Anabaptist Biblical Institute), the Spanish-language leadership program Esther Martinez calls "enriching and empowering." A graduate and now coordinator of IBA's Dallas center, Esther has also planted two Mennonite churches in the area and mentors other church planters. One of 22 teaching centers in the United States, the Dallas IBA helps equip leaders for Spanish-speaking congregations – one of the fastest growing parts of Mennonite Church USA.

The program is designed for people at all educational levels, providing both sound biblical teaching from an Anabaptist perspective and invaluable insights for Hispanic Mennonites. The result is a new generation of capable, confident Hispanic leaders – who serve not only their individual congregations but also Mennonite Church USA as a whole.

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Everett J. Thomas

God or country?

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself.
—Leviticus 19:33, 34a

A bill currently in the U.S. Congress would make it illegal to help undocumented residents in our country—if it becomes law in its current form. The bill will also create a spiritual and moral dilemma for many leaders and members of our denomination (see page 20).

"We will commit civil disobedience," says Jeff Wright, a conference minister for Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference. "Fifty pastors will go to jail. ... We hope [Mennonite Church USA will] have a bail fund."

As leaders in this part of our denomination—and elsewhere—are showing, this is one of those times to obey God rather than our government.

The national debate about immigration burst onto the Executive Board's agenda in early February while meeting in southern California—where the governor joins Minutemen patrolling the Mexican border. But many of our Mennonite sisters and brothers in Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference are not U.S. citizens and do not have necessary documentation.

"In southern California," says Al Whaley, one of three conference ministers in Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference, "large percentages of our congregations are illegal. What does that mean for helping them. Do we defy the law?"

Delegates to Atlanta 2003 adopted a resolution that anticipated such immigration issues. The statement calls Mennonite Church USA members to action.

"We reject our country's mistreatment of immigrants, repent of our silence and commit ourselves to act with and on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of their legal status," says the statement in its conclusion.

A companion document suggests specific actions. These include (there are others):

- Build relationships with the newcomers in your community.
- Partner with immigrant congregations to plan church services or community events.
- Offer church facilities and volunteers for documentation services, English classes, ethnic celebrations or other outreach programs.
- Organize study tours to the U.S.-Mexico border, refugee camps or detention centers to learn more about U.S. immigration and refugee policies.
- Advocate for just and humane policies for immigrants and refugees by contacting local, state and national elected officials.

With immigration issues at the center of the national debate, now is an especially important time to take the last action on the list. It also may be time for Mennonite Church USA to create a bail bond fund for those who obey Leviticus 19:34. Such obedience requires us to consider all who reside among us as U.S. citizens and love them as much as we love ourselves.—*ejt*

It may be time for Mennonite Church USA to create a bail bond fund for those who obey Leviticus 19:34.

Why we use 'racial-ethnic'

At the request of Mennonite Church USA's offic multicultural relations, we have begun using t term "racial-ethnic" to describe people of colo our denomination. But this description is awkward because all of us have an ethnic history and—if you accept the construct of race—belong t a certain race. During their meeting Feb. 2-4 (see page 20), Executive Board members briefly questio ed their staff—called executive leadership—about the nomenclature. Kenyetta Twine, who directs the multicultural relations office, said the request for something other than "people of color" came from Hispanic and Native American leaders who do themselves as people of color.

So Twine led a discernment process to respond to those requests. The final recommendation from her office: Whenever possible, each of the ethnic groups that would not be described as white should be listed by name. Only when that is not possible, she recommends using the phrase "under-represented racial-ethnic members."—*ejt*

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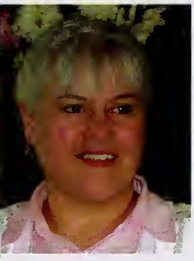
Passing on the faith and the responsibility



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

In the last days, God said, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.—Acts 2:17 NLT

I have been noticing something lately that gives me great pleasure. I noticed it in the days leading up to our biennial assembly in Charlotte. It was present at Charlotte. I have been seeing it at work at the conference level. It is there at the congregational level as well. This thing I've been noticing is an active interest in the workings of the church by our youth and young adults.

In a variety of ways, youth and young adults are telling us they have opinions about the way we are being church together. They are making it known that they want to enter discussions, and they care about the direction the church is headed. They are asking how and where they can enter the life of the church. This is good news.

In other settings, I have listened to older adults grapple with these same issues. Some would seek to squelch these fresh voices as too immature or idealistic. Others, in clinging to the changes they themselves may have helped to orchestrate, would stand in opposition to further change encouraged by anyone else. Still others may desire to empower these younger ones but struggle to know how to bring it about.

In their book *Christian Life Patterns*, Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead speak to this issue. They operate from the premise that developmental stages don't stop with adolescence and the teen years but continue throughout adulthood. The adult who ages gracefully and healthily is one who moves from taking on adult responsibilities to becoming a person who encourages the next generation to take on these responsibilities and mentors them into these roles. They write: "The challenge of mature generativity is to trust in the generational process, for certainly the next generation will alter what we hand on to them. ... The Spirit is with us from generation to generation; no individual need function as sole controller and guarantor of this transition." They go on to say that those who cannot let go of control to trust the next generation in carrying the faith forward deprive not only the next generation but themselves as they miss out on their own next stage of development.

In a perfect world, younger adults would seek to learn from the wisdom of older adults, even as they take on the responsibilities of an adult in the church. Older adults would teach and encourage the younger adults, even as they let go of their responsibilities. All generations would trust that God's Spirit is at work in the process, and they would be willing to learn from one another.

In the book of Joel and again in the book of Acts, we have a picture painted for us of God's Spirit at work within all of God's people. God's Spirit is not sprinkled or dripped upon people but liberally poured out upon everyone, regardless of gender or age. What a picture of gracious abundance and generosity!

And what a picture of being countercultural. In a day and age when women were considered of less value than men, God's treatment of women is exactly the same as God's treatment of men. In cultures that silence youth until they've reached a respectable age, God's way of doing things is to enable youth to see as God sees. In our culture, which caters to the young and the beautiful, God's methods are to give the gift of inspired dreams to the old.

God must place great value on people to give us such a wonderful gift in God's Spirit, displayed through prophecies, visions and dreams. Can we do any less than value one another and respect the gifts God gives through one another?

The Mennonite

Vol. 9, No. 5, March 7, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Cover: photo collage by Dee Birkey

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 40033185, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526

Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Addicted to our affluence?

I am saddened by Mennonite World Conference's report ("Fellowship With the Poor," Jan. 10) that the 72 percent of Mennonites who live in Africa, Asia and Latin America—a clear majority—hold less than 5 percent of our estimated wealth. In the same issue we are told that we of Mennonite Church USA can't fully support the budgets of our Executive Leadership, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Publishing Network and Mennonite Education Agency. What is even more sobering is that in spite of our investing millions every year in programs to educate our young, maintain our congregations and engage in outreach, our U.S. membership numbers remain flat and are even declining.

Many of our sister churches in the two-thirds world are experiencing rapid growth. For example, the Ethiopian Meserete Kristos Church, in one of the world's poorest countries, is now the world's largest Mennonite body. Yet it has only one struggling college, and its churches typically make do with inadequate meetinghouses and with pastors living on a pittance. By contrast, we may actually have a surplus of educational and other institutions for a denomination of our size, with six competing colleges, two seminaries and dozens of elementary and secondary schools, along with wonderful church camps and well-furnished Sunday school rooms. Our churchwide institutions, many with staffs of dedicated fund-raisers, are generating millions to build even more state-of-the-art libraries, fine arts facilities and recreational complexes—all of which take their toll on the resources available for other needs at home and abroad.

Have we become addicted to our affluence? Do we simply assume the right to our lavish (by comparison) levels of personal incomes and lifestyles in spite of the disparities between us and our sisters and brothers worldwide? Instead of ignoring this reality, I propose that it become a dominant consideration affecting every decision we make as congregations and as a denomination.—*Harvey Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Our denomination, through its congregations and conferences, commits significant—though many would say not nearly enough—resources toward youth ministry. This issue looks at some of that work and at some of the issues being and needing addressed. Bob Yoder, conference minister of youth and young adults for Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference and assistant professor and director of youth ministry at Goshen (Ind.) College, reports on a recent study of the spiritual lives of American teenagers (page 8). Daniel Medina-Hernández (page 11) argues that an Anabaptist witness is needed, particularly in our cities. Mark Horst (page 12) and Emily Derstine (page 13) relate their experiences in the !Explore program out of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Sallie Reed (page 14) writes that youth ministry needs to meet youth where they are. Youth want adult mentors who are authentic in their faith.—*Associate editor*

Hearing voices

I affirm Everett J. Thomas' Feb. 7 editorial ("Hearing Voices"). When everything is said and done, how we handle disagreements and conflict says far more about us as people of faith and a church than anything else we do in the name of Christ. If we are to be a peace church, we must learn to value and respect those with differing views without feeling threatened. Differences are inevitable, so let's start the healing process by focusing on Christ as our center. We should not ignore our differences but address them differently. Let's deliberately seek out those with whom we have differences. Make friends across the political and theological divide. Listen without trying to change minds and hearts. Let's focus on areas of agreement. They are far greater than we may think.

Ultimately it is not what we say but what we do that gives flesh to our faith in Christ as Lord. Christ commanded us to love each other. We can look to the prophetic success and witness of organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Disaster Service and MEDA for examples of how to do church. Christ's transforming power is truly enfleshed when we put our differences aside to work together in the name of Christ. Then we experience each other as indispensable and beloved partners in the body of Christ.—*Joyce M. Shutt, Fairfield, Pa.*

Thank you for a well thought-out and beautifully written editorial in the Feb. 7 edition of *The Mennonite*. Over the years I have had many of the same thoughts that Thomas expresses in the editorial. All I would add is a resounding amen! —*Jama Brookmyer Graber, Archbold, Ohio*

I appreciate Thomas' affirmation of *The Mennonite*'s vocation "to serve as a forum for voices within the denomination." It is important that we continue to grow in our ability to "agree or disagree in love."

Thus I find it troubling that Thomas then goes on to say that on the issue of homosexuality *The Mennonite* will continue to opt out of being a resource by providing a forum for discernment. Even more, Thomas' comment about the "denomination's teaching position on homosexuality" seems to deny the following explicit statement from the 2001 membership guidelines: We hold the Saskatoon and Purdue statements calling for the church to be in dialogue with those who hold differing views [on homosexuality] to be the teaching position of Mennonite Church USA.

If the teaching position includes both naming same-sex intimacy as sinful and committing the church to continuing dialogue, how can it be supporting the teaching position to close this forum to dialogue?—*Kathleen Temple, Harrisonburg, Va.*

I found Thomas' editorial "Hearing Voices" interesting in light of the fact that I've tried to provide in *DreamSeeker Magazine* (DSM) a forum—where Thomas' own voice makes significant contributions—for discussion of homosexuality. The editorial does an excellent job of highlighting the tensions *The Mennonite* aims to navigate creatively.

I affirm Thomas' commitment to making *The Mennonite* a forum for "hearing voices," and I respect his willingness to offer a rationale for limiting discussion of some topics in *The Mennonite*—even as I hope we will do more, rather than less, listening for grains of truth from those with whom we disagree.

Might it be that precisely because *The Mennonite* provides a much larger and more official forum than does an outlet such as DSM, it makes sense for *The Mennonite* to operate within the framework articulated even as forums such as DSM do some of the more informal testing of viewpoints regarding some of the hottest issues of the day? At any rate, I appreciate the thoughtful perspectives.—*Michael A. King, Telford, Pa.*

A gardener of kindness

Thanks for putting Gloria Lizcano on the front cover of *The Mennonite* and including the excellent article by Emily Will (Feb. 7). We have referred friends here to *The Mennonite* on the Internet, and they are so pleased to see how she has been recognized even outside Colombia. Martha Santanilla, cited in the article, is our host sister, and her mother is one of the people who helped identify her body, which the police were about to register as an unknown person.
—*Rosemary Wyse Reimer, Bogotá, Colombia*

Why the acronym?

I am mystified and troubled by Mennonite Mutual Aid's seeming insistence to be known only by an acronym ("Maximize the Gift of Strength," Feb. 7). I have addressed this concern directly to the Goshen, Ind., office and have received their rationale. As a kindness to newcomers (and a journalistic courtesy), any acronym should be spelled out at least once with every publication. The agency's insistence invites confusion (i.e., with Mennonite Medical Association) and hints at deception.
—*Muriel T. Stackley, Kansas City, Kan.*

What would Menno do?

Here's a little two-kingdoms theology refresher question: If President Bush came to visit your congregation on a Communion Sunday, would your church serve him Communion? If so, could you in good conscience share Communion with him? At times like this, I ask the time-honored question, "WWMD (What Would Menno Do)?"—*David T. Dietz, York, Pa.*

Help was important

We thank your wonderful church members for the aid and assistance they so graciously gave the people of our community in the wake of hurricane Katrina. They helped many of our citizens put their lives back together. Acts of Christianity, such as helping clean up a flood-damaged home or repairing a roof, were important to storm victims. Dedicated groups such as yours made the difference in many lives and gave hope for a brighter future.—*Andy and Sue Galliano, Grand Isle, La.*

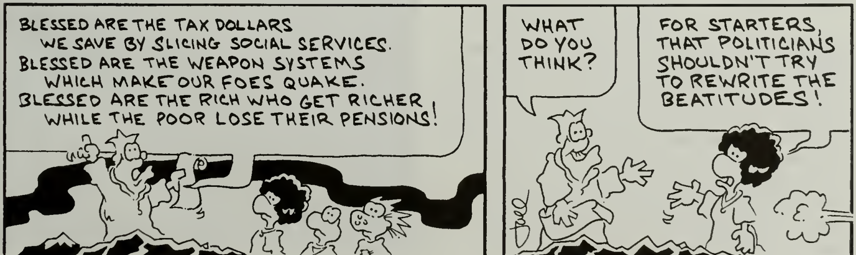
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Youth ministry today calls for radically different approaches (43 responses):

○ Yes (49%)
○ No (30%)
○ Not sure (21%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


BLESSED ARE THE TAX DOLLARS WE SAVE BY SLICING SOCIAL SERVICES. BLESSED ARE THE WEAPON SYSTEMS WHICH MAKE OUR FOES QUAKE. BLESSED ARE THE RICH WHO GET RICHER WHILE THE POOR LOSE THEIR PENSIONS!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
FOR STARTERS, THAT POLITICIANS SHOULDN'T TRY TO REWRITE THE BEATITUDES!
Joel

IN BRIEF

Rocky Mountain Camp to offer weekend retreats

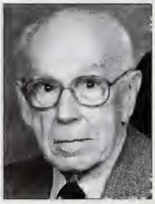
Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp near Divide, Colo., is expanding its programs for adults in 2006 by offering a new series of weekend retreats. The camp has provided programs for youth and for families as well as facilities for churches and other groups for over 50 years. But programs on specific topics are new for the camp. The retreats will focus on personal spiritual growth, environmental concerns and family concerns. For more information, see www.rmmcamp.org or call 719-687-9506. —*RMMC*

Bluffton students help build house

Bluffton (Ohio) University's chapter of Habitat for Humanity was to travel to Wauchula, Fla., with their advisor, Kendra Bermosk, March 4-11, to help build a new house in an area damaged by the 2005 hurricane season. They were to work with a local affiliate. Ten students are participating: Anne Brady, Lima, Ohio; Ashlee Dawson, Berea, Ohio; Rachel Cooley, Tiffin, Ohio; Stephanie Yoder, Pettisville, Ohio; Nick Hollis, Doylestown, Ohio; Meghan Stratford, Pandora, Ohio; Alli Marinelli, Powell, Ohio; Sarah Billings, Elida, Ohio; Tamarious Williams, Ypsilanti, Mich.; and Jennifer Roehrle, Ottawa, Ohio. —*Bluffton University*

Sunday school writer Robert Baker dies at 85

ELKHART, Ind.—Robert J. Baker, whose columns in *Builder* magazine guided Sunday school teachers for more than 35 years, died Feb. 19 in Goshen, Ind.


Robert J. Baker

Baker wrote the column "If I Were Teaching the Lesson" from 1965 to 1999 in *Builder*, a magazine for teachers in the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church.

From 1979 to 1996, Baker wrote a column for *Christian Living* magazine reflecting on the passages of life and retirement. Herald Press published a collection of these columns, *County Road 13*, in 1990.

He wrote four other Herald Press books—*Second Chance*, *God Healed Me*, *Insect Parables* and *I'm Listening, Lord, Keep Talking*.

Baker taught science in Elkhart schools from 1947 to 1987. He graduated from Goshen College and earned master's degrees from Indiana University and Michigan State University. He was also a founding member of Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

Survivors include Anna Mae (Moyer), his wife; three sons, two daughters, two brothers, 16 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Melissa Engie

Raising funds, one heifer at a time

Darrell Ranck is one of several Pennsylvania farmers who contributes a heifer each year to be auctioned to raise funds for Mennonite Central Committee. The annual heifer sale has raised some $1.5 million for MCC since it began in 1981.—*MCC*

Career mission worker to India dies at 94

NEWTON, Kan.—Harold Ratzlaff spent his entire career serving in India as an evangelist, educator and administrator. He died Feb. 10 at age 94.

Harold Ratzlaff

Ratzlaff was born April 27, 1911, to Jacob C. and Mary Becker Ratzlaff and raised on a farm near Meno, Okla. After graduating from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., he married Ruth Regier, a nurse, on Sept. 3, 1938.

In September 1940, the Ratzlaffs went to India and began studying the Hindi language. They began their first assignments at Champa, where he was placed in charge of evangelism in that district and she was hospital administrator. In 1945, they transferred to Jagdeeshpur to be responsible for district evangelism and church work.

They returned to North America in 1947, and he completed a master's degree at Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago. In 1950, they returned to Champa, resuming his evangelism work, which expanded to include the Mauhadi area. Later he alternately managed all the mission schools in Korba and Champa.

Ruth died Feb. 16, 1992. He was preceded in death by infant son Harold Eugene; daughter Mary Ann Jensen; and granddaughter Sharon Jensen. He is survived by one grandson, Frederick Jensen of Amherst, N.Y; and son-in-law Gary Jensen of Lake Jackson, Texas. He was a member of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Clara Kauffman dies at 97

HESSTON, Kan.—Clara Kauffman, widow of former Hesston College president Milo Kauffman, died Wednesday, Feb. 8 at age 97.

She is remembered as a colorful woman who played an important behind-the-scenes supportive role for her husband, Milo, who was president of Hesston from 1932 to 1951. He died in 1988.

Clara Kauffman

Clara (Fricke) grew up in Chicago and married Milo there in 1931. Daughter Bonnie Sowers, director of the college's nursing program and associate dean, says her mother shared a lot in his work.

Over the years, the Milo and Clara Kauffman Scholarship Fund has grown to approximately $155,000. This school year the fund provided about $7,600 in scholarships to Hesston students.

Survivors include seven children (one son and six daughters), one brother, one sister, 28 grandchildren and 38 great-grandchildren.—*Hesston College*

Korea's first Anabaptist church turns 10

CHUNCHEON, South Korea—Jesus Village Church celebrated 10 years of ministry Jan. 14-15 with a potluck meal, video remembrances, a historical book, personal sharing and many bows, handshakes and hugs. Sunday morning festivities included a cake with candles, Communion and a message by Cha Sungdo, one of the JVC founders.

Sang-Uk Nam, JVC coordinator, wrote a commemorative book about JVC's history.

Jesus Village Church, with about 40 believers, began on the first Sunday of 1996 after three years of intense study by a cell group concerned about the professionalism, hierarchy, institutionalism and legalism of the traditional Christian church in Korea. After learning about the Reformed and Anabaptist churches through prayers, studies and conversations, members felt led by the Holy Spirit to join the Anabaptist-Mennonite community and connect to rediscovering the New Testament Church.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Andrew Wade

ng Kong mission celebrates 40 years

ndy Lo and April Hung of Grace Mennonite Church lead rship at the opening celebration of 40 years of Mennonite ssion work in Hong Kong. Forty years ago, Ira and Evelyn rtz, workers with Eastern Mennonite Missions, moved to ng Kong to begin a ministry of compassion and church nting. Four decades later, workers supported by Mennonite encies with connections to five countries work alongside ng Kong leaders in an Anabaptist ministry that includes ee churches, a Christian center and international mission rk of its own.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

MDS and MEDA help small businesses in Gulf

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) will provide a three-year grant of $450,000 for a Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) "Back to Business" program in New Orleans and the surrounding areas. The grant will be used to respond immediately by helping business owners struggling to restart their businesses. Business assistance clinics offering help with needed permits, strategic planning and market testing will be some of the first steps.

MEDA also will have staff in New Orleans to help individuals access resources locally and nationally. Plans also include working with local lending institutions to ensure that businesses not meeting conventional lending requirements can access funds they need to get restarted. All this will be done in cooperation with local churches, agencies and organizations to help MEDA and MDS understand the local situation. Rachel Hess, MEDA's director of Community Economic Development, will supervise the developing program.—*MDS*

Goshen president signs global warming call

GOSHEN, Ind.—When 86 U.S. evangelical Christian leaders expressed a faith-driven commitment to curb global warming and call for legislation to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, Goshen College Interim President John Yordy wanted to be part of this group.

Yordy, a professor of chemistry at Goshen before becoming provost in 1997, was one of 39 presidents of Christian colleges to sign. He was also one of five presidents of Mennonite-affiliated institutions, which included D. Merrill Ewert from Fresno Pacific University, Larry Nikkel from Tabor College, Ron Sider from Evangelicals for Social Action and Loren Swartzendruber from Eastern Mennonite University.

"Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action," released Feb. 6, makes four points: (1) "Human-induced climate change is real;" (2) "the consequences of climate change will be significant, and will hit the poor the hardest;"(3) "Christian moral convictions demand our response to the climate change problem;" and (4) "the need to act now is urgent. Governments, businesses, churches and individuals all have a role to play in addressing climate change starting now." Signatories pledged to act on the basis of these points and to "seek ways to implement the actions that follow from them."

Yordy said, "We are stewards of God's world and called to love our neighbor as ourselves in our towns and in all lands."—*Goshen College*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

AMBS student wins hymn contest

Adam M.L. Tice of Goshen, Ind., and a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., has won the 10th annual hymn writing contest sponsored by Macalester Plymouth United Church. He wrote his hymn, "The Church of Christ Cannot Be Bound," in response to the contest's call for new hymns calling the church and its people to greater awareness of the plight of the homeless and to the need for affordable housing for all people. The winning hymn receives a prize of $500. Tice is a graduate of Goshen College. The inspiration for his prize-winning text comes from the writings of Menno Simons, who in 1539 wrote: "True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant. It clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry, it comforts the sorrowful, it shelters the destitute, and it serves those who harm it. It binds up that which is wounded. It has become all things to all people."

Bono urges U.S. to double aid budget

"God is in the slums, in the cardboard boxes where the poor play house. God is in the silence of a mother who has infected her child with a virus that will end both their lives. God is in the cries heard under the rubble of war. God is in the debris of wasted opportunity and lives. And God is with us, if we are with them."—*U2's lead singer Bono at the National Prayer Breakfast*

The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers

Nurturing the

by Bob Yoder

I hear comments like these: "The youth today are just so different than previous generations." "Doing youth ministry in a postmodern era calls for radically different approaches." Do you agree or disagree with these statements? Or do you simply feel out of touch with young people and dare not venture an answer? A deeper question is, How will we nurture the Christian faith of young people now and in the future?

As I have served in conference youth ministry and taught college youth ministry courses, I have been surprised by what the term "youth ministry" conjures up in people's minds—Wednesday night Bible studies, conventions, fun, service trips. These activities can help shape the faith of adolescents, but do they adequately entail what is needed to pass on the Christian faith? We as a church must do more, but at the same time we are doing more to instill faith in young people than we realize.

Are we content to allow a human-centered theology that only calls out to God when we feel we need God to perpetuate itself across generations?

faith of youth

The book *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton (Oxford University Press, 2005, $25) shares the findings from the National Study of Youth and Religion, a comprehensive sociological research project conducted at the University of North Carolina that began in 2001. The project seeks to research the shape and influence of religion and spirituality in the lives of American adolescents; to identify effective practices in the religious, moral and social formation of the lives of youth; to describe the extent and perceived effectiveness of the programs and opportunities religious communities offer their youth, and to foster an informed national discussion about the influence of religion in youth's lives, in order to encourage sustained reflection about our cultural and institutional practices with regard to youth and religion. The conclusions in this book offer challenge and hope.

First, the authors discovered that religion is a significant presence in the lives of many U.S. teens today; in fact, most teenagers generally feel positive toward religion and the institutional church. However, religion operates in a weak social structural position compared with other activities and organizations that lay claim to their time, and so religion is simply not a big deal to them. Furthermore, the spiritual and religious understanding among teens is weak, and for the most part they are inarticulate about their faith beliefs.

Second, supply and demand matters to the spiritual lives of teenagers. The greater the availability of religiously grounded relationships, activities, programs, opportunities and challenges for teens, the more likely they are to be religiously engaged and invested. In other words, "congregations [conferences, denominations] that prioritize youth ministry and support for their parents, invest in trained and skilled youth group leaders and make serious efforts to engage and teach adolescents seem much more likely to draw youth into their religious lives."

Third, this study concluded that teenagers tend to espouse a religious outlook that is distinct and different from traditional faith commitments of most U.S. religious traditions. This can be described as Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD), which is: "(1) A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life. (2) God wants people to be good, nice and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions. (3) The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. (4) God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem. (5) Good people go to heaven when they die."

This third point, however, is directly connected to the fourth. The single most important influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents. In fact, most American teenagers follow in their parents' footsteps when it comes to religion, and thereby teenage religiosity is extraordinarily conventional. In other words, the "youth culture" described in *Soul Searching* suggests that the beliefs and practices of youth are really a mirror image of their parents' beliefs and practices. Perhaps the generations are not that different, even though it may appear that way on the surface at times.

The finding that parents are the number one influencers of the faith of young people has been documented in other studies over the past few decades. Yet this leaves me wondering if and how

Continued on page 10

The best way to get most youth more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious about their faith communities.—from *Soul Searching*

Continued from page 9

we as a church support and nurture the parent-teen relationship in our youth ministry programs and activities. Will we be serious about nurturing the faith of our young people through relationships already proven to be extremely influential? I am not suggesting that other adults in the church do not play significant roles in the faith formation of adolescents—they do—but why isn't "strengthening parent-teen relationships" as common to youth ministry as other activities?

Furthermore, this study leaves me troubled by the religious outlook of MTD. Now, there will not be youth who consciously say, "I believe in MTD," but if young people are mirrors to their parents, then what are we teaching our adults in the church? Are we content to allow a human-centered theology that only calls out to God when we feel we need God to perpetuate itself across generations? Our inability to articulate faith understandings will only result in a heightened sense of American individualism, particularly for Mennonites who value community and a Christ-centered faith.

However, I also glean much hope from *Soul Searching*. Youth are "getting it"; they do pick up and embody what is modeled to them by their parents and other adults. Young people are not a strange breed we need to dissect and study. They value adult relationships and learn from them. If we can be authentic and appropriately transparent with them about our lives and our faith, then they will get it. The challenge for adults is to engage in spiritual practices that nurture their spiritual formation and growth. In the midst of our busy schedules, are we willing to do that? Will we be the spiritual mentors our youth need?

A second hope from this study is that highly religious teenagers appear to be doing much better in life than less religious teenagers in regard to certain life outcomes, such as risk behaviors (drug and alcohol abuse, cigarette smoking), suspensions from school, relationships with parents, sexual activity, emotional well-being, attitudes about life, moral compassion and reasoning, and community participation. In other words, an active, highly involved faith makes a difference in lives of young people.

A final hope stems from this suggestion: "The best way to get most youth more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious about their faith communities." As Mennonites, this fits well with our understanding of discipleship; if we engage outreach and evangelism seriously, then we will strive to nurture the faith of whole families and not be content with reaching only certain individuals. Our challenge is to help all ages actively journey the faith Christ calls us to.

In addition to parents, relationships with adults are essential, particularly for those who experience strained relationships with their parents or whose parents are deceased. This too connects with Mennonites' historical approach of passing on the faith through an intergenerational community. When I consider youth ministry, I do not think of highly programmatic events, particularly since I am a product of small churches. I am a committed Christian and an ordained pastor in Mennonite Church USA not because of "successful" youth activities, though they had their proper role and function, but ultimately because of the Spirit's movement in me and through the lives of Mom, Dad, Uncle Paul, Aunt Doris, Louise, Lynn, Don, Ruth, Roman, Ken and others.

Bob Yoder is conference minister of youth and young adults for Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference and assistant professor and director of youth ministry at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Kevin Kanagy, EMU

Youth ministry is missional

The Anabaptist witness is needed in our cities.

by Daniel Medina-Hernández

My research and study of Anabaptism has led me to several conclusions. First, Anabaptism is long overdue in becoming a relevant and transforming agent in the lives of many young people in the United States. Second, the Mennonites are unprepared to be relevant or to force itself outside its usual rural or small city comfort zone and engage the urban experience in major cities across America for the sake of bringing the Anabaptist vision into the national collective psyche.

Of all the Christian denominations, traditions and historical expressions available to people everywhere, the radical Christianity found in Anabaptism is unique. It can make significant strides and contributions to the life of the church. Why? The Anabaptist tradition seeks to live out the teachings of Jesus in spite of challenges that often seem insurmountable. The skeptic might say this makes Anabaptism less attractive. I disagree.

In terms of youth ministry, it is probably one of its most attractive features. Many youth want to be part of a radical expression of spirituality and service. Many young people opt for spirituality minus God and seek to serve their communities in secular or nominally Christian settings. Anabaptism provides an alternative for youth. In that tradition, young people will find a dynamic Christianity that seeks to love, serve and make peace. Through its teachings of radical discipleship and community, youth can find the spiritual fellowship for which they hunger.

In other Christian expressions, the dominant culture has sadly weakened the will of many to live in an alternative, upside-down-kingdom context. To the Anabaptist mindset, however, service is so intrinsic that the expectation to live out the Word of God, even unto persecution, is intentional. Believe it or not, many young people want to live out biblical truths. Youth want a refreshing expression of Christianity that sets out peace and justice not as abstract ideals but attainable expressions of loving one's neighbor.

For those who feel their experience with youth has not been encouraging, experiences such as the !Explore program out of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection) may change their mind. Youth need leaders who live outside the comfort zones of tradition. They need leaders who define Anabaptism along theological rather than ethnic lines. The Mennonite church must go urban. (By urban I don't mean hip-hop culture but the multiethnic and multiracial face of our cities.) The Mennonite Game will need to be forfeited in order to build up communities of Anabaptists that will testify of the radical discipleship the founding fathers and mothers of the Third Way envisioned. Youth will be moved by action and faithfulness, not the way we've always done it.

Youth ministry is missional. Youth ministry is also family. In bringing the gospel to youth, you must bring it to their parents and guardians as well. The mission-driven Mennonite church will bring youth into the church because it enacts the Christian faith. In being a dynamic presence in communities, it will bring in parents and their children. In the same way Mennonites provide a loving devotion to countries around the world, they must do as well in this nation. The Anabaptist witness is needed in our cities.

Youth ministry must be understood in the context of doing mission for a specific purpose. That purpose is to bring people to know Jesus as Master and Savior. Therefore, evangelization is the primary role of youth ministry. If the church chooses to bring youth into its programs simply for advocacy of several socially and politically driven initiatives, then youth ministry will fail. We must seek to bring youth into the fold for the sake of the Good Shepherd. They are the future of the church; they are fellow sojourners in the kingdom of God.

If the church chooses to bring youth into its programs simply for advocacy of several socially and politically driven initiatives, then youth ministry will fail.

Daniel Medina-Hernández attended Homestead (Fla.) Mennonite Church when he wrote this article. He now attends St. Thomas Episcopal Parish, Coral Gables, Fla.

Encouraged to be a leader

Youth need adults as mentors.

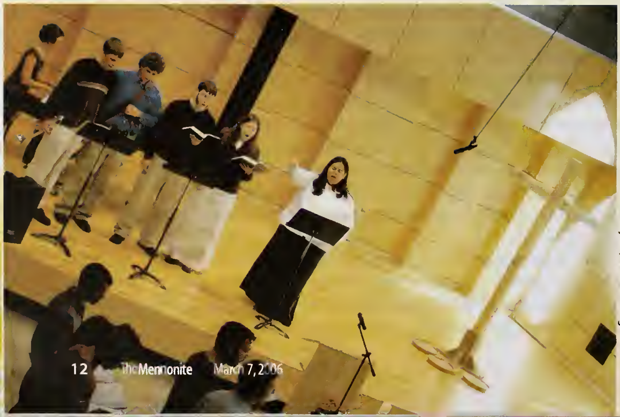
by Mark Horst

What is church really? A building? A community? A place to get away from the “real world”? Yes. While being able to get away from the temptations of the world and fellowship with other believers is an important part of church, however, the main focus of a church should be to build and expand community.

I would not be where I am today if a few adults had not had the goal of building community. I was nudged, sometimes shoved, into taking various leadership roles. Without that prodding I would not have grown to where I am today. The mentors I had in high school helped me take an active part in the leadership of our youth organizations, and I thank them every chance I get. As a freshman at Hesston (Kan.) College in the youth ministry program, I am here because of how I was nurtured throughout junior high and high school. The adults in my church and youth organizations recognized my interests and helped me realize how I could use my interests to reach my peers.

Youth today are talented, and their talent and desire to be a part of the church need to be used or they will find other outlets for their expertise. Caring adults helped me find my niche, and I feel compelled to do that for others. I want to help young people like myself become integrated into the Mennonite church, which is saturated with adult leaders. Young people have valuable skills, bright imaginations and new ideas that can help the church grow in quality disciples for Jesus. I also want to see more adults take an active part in the lives of the youth. The church should strive to connect youth with strong Christian adults so youth can learn from mature Christians.

It is up to adults to meet youth where they are. And this can’t be temporary.



Jodi H. Beyeler, Goshen College

Turning this vision into reality is another story. Forced mentorship is not as productive as when there is a mutual desire to grow together. The church is going to have to take great strides to nurture authentic intergenerational relationships. This won’t be easy and sometimes will feel threatening. I am intimidated by the different “culture” older people inhabit. They just seem to have so much more life experience that I can’t contend with their amazing stories. Also, adults probably will have to initiate the relationship. Youth today are abandoned and may seem to push adults away. According to Chap Clark in his book *Hurt*, it is because they have been betrayed in previous relationships and don’t want to be hurt again. It is up to adults to meet youth where they are. And this can’t be temporary. A relationship intended only to last a few weeks or months will just add to the problem. Youth have been left hanging, and that is why they are wary of a new relationship. If they get hurt again, it will take a long time to regain that trust.

The Mennonite church has a bright future, and I want to be a part of it. I am thankful for my mentors. One of the most crucial parts of becoming a Christian is having adults who care enough to spend time nurturing youth.

Mark Horst is a current first-year student at Hesston (Kan.) College and a member of New Life Mennonite Church, Somerset, Pa. Last summer he took part in the !Explore program out of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Passionate to follow Jesus

Excited about Jesus and his work in the world

by Emily Derstine

I have become even more encouraged and strengthened in my Mennonite faith after participating in the !Explore program. I now have an even greater desire to serve the church throughout my life, and I want to expand my view of God's wider church. I am excited about the Mennonite church and have a passion to be a part of the great things God is doing in our world.

My biggest passion is to make a difference in the world. I want to be a witness through the way I live my life and the way I treat the people around me. I hope to be a light to all with whom I interact. I want to share Jesus' love with the world.

I want to be a part of the Mennonite church because I believe that being a light to the world is what the Mennonite church strives for as well. Being an active, mission-oriented church is crucial. We may have to work up to being bold in our faith, but Jesus has called us to do this.

Jesus has also called us to live in harmony with others. Therefore I am passionate about peace and justice in our world. Countless injustices need attention. Many people around the world go day to day without the important things we deem necessary for survival: food, clothing, clean water, a place to live. Jesus has called us to face these unjust situations and do what we can to help the people involved.

Along with justice, I am interested in living simply. I am passionate about caring for the environment, as it is our responsibility as Christians to care for God's beautiful creation through living environmentally sustainable lives. Mennonites have always had a tradition of living simply, but now, more than ever, we need to be reminded of these beliefs in the midst of a consumerist society.

I want to be a part of the Mennonite church because I believe our church is trying to be in tune with Jesus' teachings. We have such a rich history of martyrs who have paved the way for us, holding true to their faith in the midst of persecution. And I am encouraged by the Mennonite church of the future because of the many ways I have seen God at work, both in my local neighborhood and in the global community.

Matt Styer, EMU

Mennonites have had a tradition of living simply, but now, more than ever, we need to be reminded of these beliefs in the midst of a consumerist society.

After my experiences in the !Explore program and the youth convention at Charlotte 2005, I have hope for an amazing generation of youth who are excited about Jesus and his work in the world. I hope we will be encouraged in our faith each day as we seek to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Emily Derstine is a student at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and a member of Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa. Last summer she took part in the !Explore program out of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Three components in a missional youth ministry

Meeting teens where they are

Everett J. Thomas

by Sallie Reed

Which is a picture of a "missional" youth ministry? Skating youth workers who read from the Bible while tackling ramps and 360s? A coffeehouse that through music and art seeks to show God's desire for relationship with teenagers who would never step foot in a church? A group of teenagers and adults who meet in a Sunday school room amid folding chairs, Bibles and brownies?

Trick question. The answer is all of the above. All these ministries are seeking to meet youth where they are—geographically, emotionally and spiritually. They are honoring God, building God's kingdom and inviting youth into a closer relationship with God.

Whether youth have been raised in a Christian home or do not even know who Jesus is, there will come a point where ownership of faith needs to take place. This is why ministry to teens has a natural missional tendency.

There are three components in a missional youth ministry: (1) an environment where teens can be themselves, (2) adults who are willing to be authentic and open in modeling their faith journeys and (3) leaders willing to invite youth to be a part of the family of Christ by showing the work of God today.

Youth ministries should provide a safe, welcoming space. Not safe in the sense of no adventure, excitement or radical living for Christ but safe in the way teens feel encouraged to be themselves, to struggle with doubts and ask questions.

Teenage years are filled with anxiety, fun, excitement and questions. Questions range from Who am I? and How does God fit into my life? to Should I date, and if so, whom should I date? If youth can't turn to the people of God to grow authentically and struggle in their faith, where can they go?

I remember speaking to a youth leader as a young teen. I was not sure I was ready to make a continuing commitment to Christ. I had some doubts; I had questions. The one thing I remember in our conversation was my youth leader's encouragement in pointing out that doubts aren't necessarily harmful. It's what we do with doubts that make them harmful. If we allow God to work through our doubts and work through our anxiety, we actually wind up in a closer relationship with God and a greater realization of God in our lives. This conversation helped open me up to seeking God in a way I had not before.

A missional youth ministry also requires adult leaders willing to be authentic and vulnerable. When teens come to us with questions, we should not give them easy answers, especially in situations where there are no easy answers. We need to be willing to struggle alongside them and show that we don't know all the answers, and that's OK.

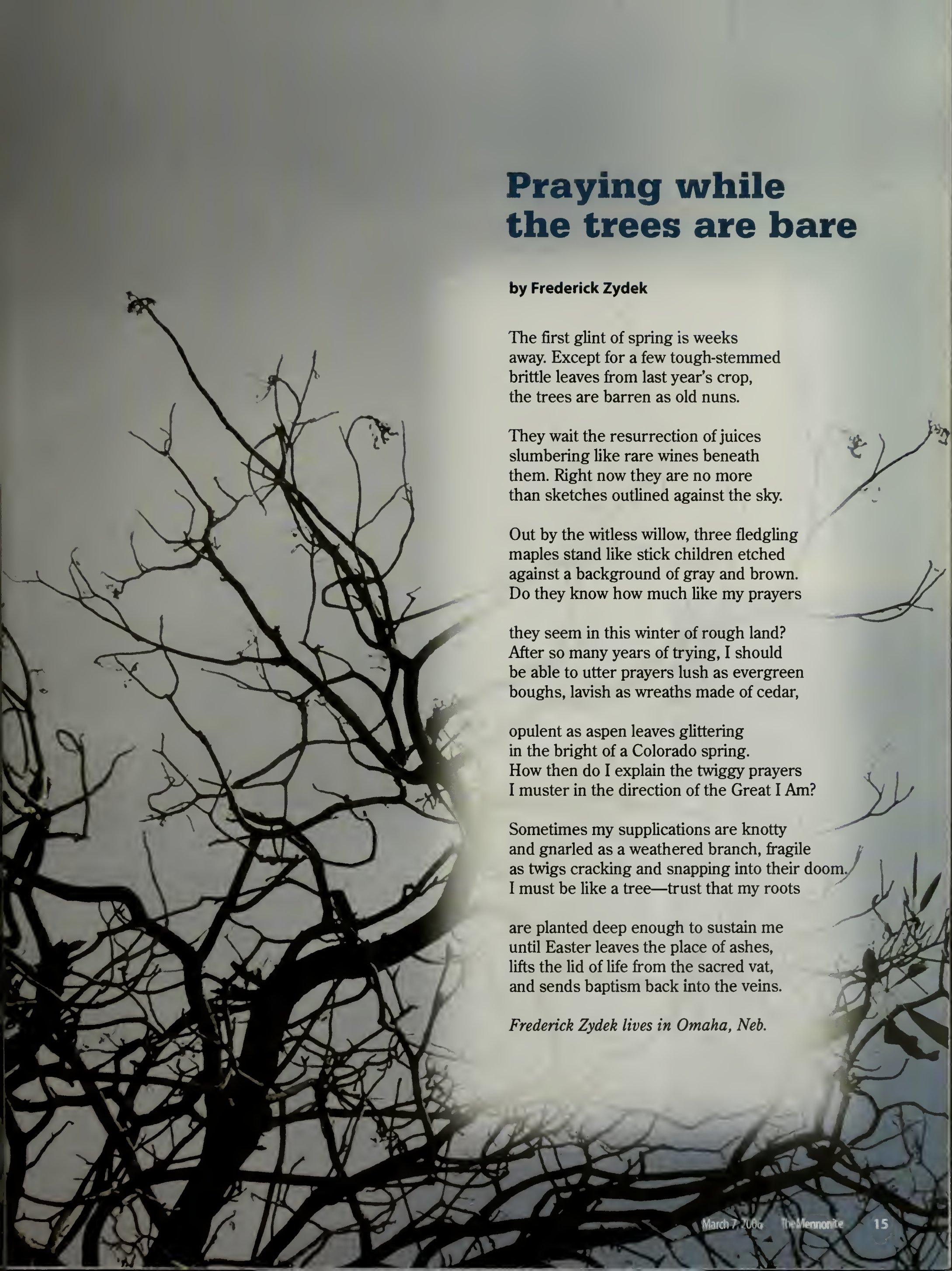
When teens come to us with questions, we should not give them easy answers, especially in situations where there are no easy answers.

God has given each of us our own faith journey. What a gift to share that with youth, to share where we were and where God has led us. We are still in process, and God is still at work in our lives; youth need to know this.

A missional youth ministry does not leave kids hanging where they are, in despair and doubt. We recognize we don't have all the answers, but we know Someone who does. We need to invite youth to see the God moments in their lives and accept the call of Jesus to know him more intimately.

Being an intentionally missional youth ministry allows opportunities to witness growth in the lives of youth and in our lives. When we meet teens where they are, how exciting it is to walk with them and invite them to experience a greater love and relationship with their heavenly God!

Sallie Reed is associate pastor of children and youth at Bally (Pa.) Mennonite Church.



Praying while the trees are bare

by Frederick Zydek

The first glint of spring is weeks
away. Except for a few tough-stemmed
brittle leaves from last year's crop,
the trees are barren as old nuns.

They wait the resurrection of juices
slumbering like rare wines beneath
them. Right now they are no more
than sketches outlined against the sky.

Out by the witless willow, three fledgling
maples stand like stick children etched
against a background of gray and brown.
Do they know how much like my prayers

they seem in this winter of rough land?
After so many years of trying, I should
be able to utter prayers lush as evergreen
boughs, lavish as wreaths made of cedar,

opulent as aspen leaves glittering
in the bright of a Colorado spring.
How then do I explain the twiggy prayers
I muster in the direction of the Great I Am?

Sometimes my supplications are knotty
and gnarled as a weathered branch, fragile
as twigs cracking and snapping into their doom.
I must be like a tree—trust that my roots

are planted deep enough to sustain me
until Easter leaves the place of ashes,
lifts the lid of life from the sacred vat,
and sends baptism back into the veins.

Frederick Zydek lives in Omaha, Neb.

3 in a series of six

Holistic Stewardship

The stewardship of time

Numbering

by Roy E. Bronkema

Life needs rhythm. It requires ebb and flow, drama and calm, speed and relaxation. What distinguishes music from just a jumble of notes is this sense of order and the ability to "organize" the chaos of melody and harmony with appropriate rhythm. A one-octave scale played from top to bottom can be changed into the first line of "Joy to the World" if you put pauses in just the right places. A good part of what makes it beautiful is that an expert musician can inject rest into the race and pause into the pace. What makes it music? The rhythm. What gives life its music? The rhythm.

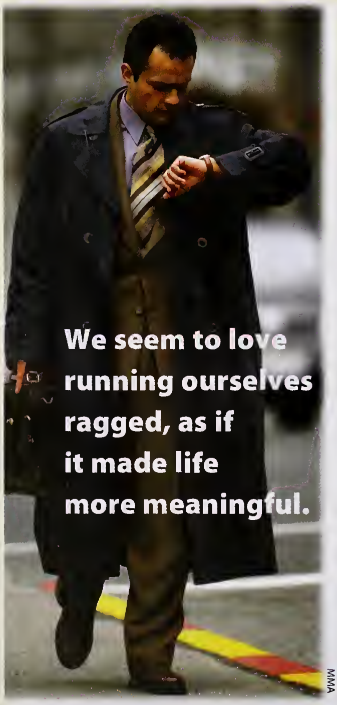
All of us were created to experience life with rhythm. The God of the seasons built into the nature of the world a need for pause. The Creator worked hard for six days but rested on the seventh. Why? Was God in need of strength? Was he tired after making the sun and moon, hippos and hibiscuses? Not at all. He was putting his exclamation mark on the true nature of this world—injecting rhythm, as a master artisan should. Jesus took much time to withdraw, retreating for whole nights to commune with his Father. The admonition, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy" is not a mere suggestion from the Holy One but a commentary on the nature of our world. We need rhythm.

But we harried Americans fight rhythm. We seem to love the pace of these 24-hour marathons we call days. We seem to love running ourselves ragged, as if it made life more meaningful. We steadfastly refuse to come away for a few minutes to commune with our Maker, as if we don't need what Jesus did. And our lives reflect the stress and mess we create with nonstop activity.

In this continuing series on holistic stewardship, we address our love affair with busyness and the ongoing obsession with filling our hours. If we are going to "redeem the time," as we are commanded to in Scripture, we must understand the nature of rhythm. What does the Bible say about our time and how to steward it successfully? Ultimately our stewardship of life—the money we gain, the gifts we receive, the relationships we engender and the health we maintain—are all dependent upon how we fill our hours. Time is a major factor that indicates our priorities, and it demonstrates what we allow to have the most influence on our lives. We must manage it well to make an impact in every other stewardship arena.

First, time is limited, but the same amount is given to each of us. Imagine receiving a weekly stipend of $168 for as long as you live. Think about it coming without conditions, so it can be spent however you like. Would it be a blessing? Yes, because it is undeserved and unconditional. But would you be wealthy? It depends on how you spend or invest it, whether you squander or save it.

Our time—exactly 168 hours a week—is also a great blessing. It is undeserved and given without conditions. And in the same way, it can be wasted or invested. James put it this way in his New Testament book: "You do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (4:14). Time is a limited commodity that goes so quickly the Bible compares it to a mist that evaporates. So we should spend our 168 limited resources with clear priori-



We seem to love running ourselves ragged, as if it made life more meaningful.

MMA

r days

ties—with a view to advancing God's kingdom, obeying his commands, loving his people.

Second, there are two biblical antidotes to the stress of harried schedules: rest and solitude. Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). There are times we are not just tired but bone tired. This weariness of soul was what Jesus referred to, and his antidote was a rest of soul, not just for our bodies but our spirits as well. Coming to our Lord provides a deep rest, for he is able to exchange our problems for perspective.

But oh how we fight solitude: We wrestle with spending quiet hours. We feel somehow wasteful, as if frantic activity redeems our fragile self-worth. But only in communion with our Maker in solitude can we get the emotional rejuvenation we truly need. We must approach Jesus first because he not only offers us rest but is our rest.

Finally, we should try to avoid two major faults of improper time stewardship: waste and worry. Since time is in limited quantity, we should live with purpose—not wasting it by letting what we believe to be urgent drive us. We should keep our significant priorities of faithful living in view—not letting daily distractions interrupt what's important in our lives. Equally damaging is believing that tomorrow is ours and must be worried over. Jesus reminded his listeners that the Father knew their needs and would provide for them, if they would make the kingdom of God their primary concern. He taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." We must learn not to trust in tomorrow—but not to worry about it either.

When devoted to our highest priorities and ideals, time becomes a strong investment in the kingdom of God. Every other stewardship category (relationships, money, health and talent) is strengthened by the clear devotion of our best time and energy on what matters.

Steve Ganger, MMA's director of stewardship education, gives us a practical reminder in his book *Time Warped*: God wants our moments to be managed in light of eternity, with the rhythm of rest and the purpose of clear priorities.

"It has been more than three years since that night when I decided to overturn my upside-down priorities," he writes, "[and] my schedule is still overbooked, now and then. It always surprises me how quickly it can happen. The rival god Time does not knock on your door. It slides under the door, hiding in dark places, squeezing into crevices. As soon as you turn your back, Time lunges for any vulnerable area … until the Lord calls us home, we will be in a regular battle for control of our waking hours.

"I pray that as you start doing less you will find more of God. God is able to do more in our lives than we can imagine and show us how—in his time."

Amen to that.

Roy E. Bronkema is a free-lance writer specializing in work for churches and Christian organizations. Roy and Nancy, his wife, reside in Niles, Mich. Next month's article will explore the holistic stewardship of our relationships.

Associated resources

- ***Time Warped*** **by Steve Ganger, MMA's director of stewardship education—available at the MMA Bookstore (http://bookstore.mma-online.org).**
- **Look for a local MMA Stewardship University event in your area at MMA-online, under Education and resources. —*Roy E. Bronkema***

MMA

Pro-life means antiwar

Timothy P. Allen is a member of Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City, Ohio.

As Christians discuss and debate the Iraq War, believers from different traditions, and even those within similar traditions, espouse different views—but rarely is it pointed out that war is intrinsically a pro-life issue.

Unfortunately, among those protesting this war, a deafening silence comes from those who claim the pro-life title yet apply it only to abortion. Those of us in the peace church tradition consider ourselves totally and consistently pro-life but are rarely identified as such.

However, when the term pro-life is used in the media or by those in the pro-life movement, it almost always refers to the narrow areas of abortion and/or stem cell research. Having a consistent pro-life stance includes opposition to abortion. But it's much more than that. Being consistently pro-life means we have a high view of all people—women, men and children—and a respect for life based on our faith.

To have a consistent theology of life, we must oppose all killing.

At its core, this view has a simple biblical truth: All humans have the "imago Dei." We are all created in the image of God. Christians believe God created all life. Humans, as the pinnacle of creation, have the blessing and responsibility of bearing God's image. Thus it is always wrong to harm or destroy this creation. Doing so treats God with contempt—in essence saying God's image is worthless, something we can mangle and kill.

We thus oppose the taking of all human life. We are grieved by abortion because of our deep-seated belief that it takes a human life and affronts the God who created life. This is where most traditional pro-life groups stop. But to have a consistent theology of life, we must go further and oppose all killing.

How is such a theology applied? It includes the belief that people should not murder one another. Other beliefs are less obvious to some, but they come from the same basis and form a logical whole.

Consistently pro-life people also oppose killing done by a state or political entity in the name of the corporate whole. We oppose the death penalty. A person who takes another life has done a horrible thing, yet that individual still has been created in God's image. It is immoral to carry out a death sentence and destroy a part of the imago Dei.

Thus believing the state has no right to harm or destroy this image of God, we logically must oppose war, which involves killing not only combatants but innocent women, men and children. Knowing that the fighting will maim and destroy people created in God's image, all God's followers face a biblical imperative to oppose war.

George W. Bush's desire for and continual defense of this war with Iraq makes it clear he does not share this theology. He claims to be pro-life, but if he held a consistent, completely pro-life theology he would not have sought this war or wish it to continue (neither would he support the death penalty).

Bush is not alone in this inconsistency. It is often found in pro-life circles, where many are silent about this war or actually speak in favor of it. Some such people may lack a consistent pro-life theology because they haven't considered their biblical position thoroughly and critically. Others see Bush as a hero—the one they believe will end abortion. From my experience in the pro-life movement, these people hesitate to criticize him because he works to save the lives of those within the womb—and therefore remain silent or support him as he orders the deaths of thousands of those already born.

Most Christians believing in the sanctity of all human life reject this dichotomy, seeing its inconsistency. Yet many in the pro-life movement either remain silent or, more often, support this war. They are thus commendably antiabortion—but they are not consistently pro-life. TM

This is adapted from a column published in The Columbus Dispatch *three days after the start of the Iraq War.*

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The gift of waiting**—Laurie Oswald Robinson
- **When friendships go too far**—Gerald and Marlene Kaufman
- **Announcing God's forgiveness**—John M. Drescher

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Survey: weak support for peace position

Fifty-nine percent of Virginia Mennonites OK with violence for self-defense.

According to a recent survey, most Mennonites in Virginia seem unwilling to "turn the other cheek." During the fall 2005 semester, a group of five Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) students completed the survey as part of their methods of social research class.

The target audience was members of Virginia Mennonite Conference congregations. It revealed that 59 percent of those completing the survey felt it was OK for Mennonites to use violence in self-defense. The random sampling of VMC's 66 member churches resulted in the selection of 20 churches. Of those, only three congregations declined participation. Although most of the 540 individual respondents supported the Mennonite peace stance, there were some surprises.

The survey asked questions about five different dimensions of the peace stance: support for war, military service, the death penalty, personal self-defense and serving in public office or on the police force.

One question asked whether the person being surveyed supported the Mennonite peace stance. The average response indicated strong affirmation. However, there was a significant clustering of responses (about 30 percent) near the middle, suggesting some ambivalence—if not opposition—to the peace stance. Among those surveyed:

- A minority (48 percent) supported the traditional Mennonite prohibition against serving in the military in any capacity.
- Nearly one-third (31 percent) felt Mennonites could serve in the military, but only as non-combatants.
- Fifteen percent felt that Mennonites were free to serve in the military in any capacity.
- Fifteen percent felt that Mennonites were prohibited from serving in the police force.
- Only 5 percent felt that prohibition extended to holding public office.
- Forty percent supported the idea of the United States participating in war.
- Most (57 percent) were not supportive of peace protests.
- Only 27 percent think withholding taxes is an appropriate response to U.S. policies.
- Fifty-seven percent opposed the death penalty.

The question that drew the most agreement suggested prayer as an appropriate response to public policies. Ninety percent agreed they should pray, while 83 percent felt financial support for activist organizations was a good way to go.

Terrence Jantzi, EMU's professor of sociology, who supervised the survey, estimates the margin of error for this particular survey instrument and sample size was relatively large at plus or minus 10 percent. This means that if the survey results say 59 percent of those surveyed say it is OK to use violence in self-defense, the true percentage of VMC members who feel that way lies somewhere between 49 and 69 percent.

> We do not prepare for war or participate in war or military service.
> —Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective

Ten years ago, VMC established a policy with regard to military service and church membership. Delegates affirmed Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, which says, "As disciples of Christ, we do not prepare for war or participate in war or military service." However, while not condoning the practice of some VMC churches of allowing military people to become members, the conference wished to remain in full relationship and dialogue with those congregations.

The policy says, "We believe obligation to military orders is incompatible with church membership and expect candidates for membership in our congregations will move toward freedom from military obligations. We expect those credentialed for ministry by the conference to uphold the Mennonite Church's stance against participation in violence and war."—*Steve Carpenter for Virginia Mennonite Conference*

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MCC worker helps collect machine guns

Militia members in Somalia turn over their guns for vocational training.

Courtesy photo

MCC worker Christy Sprinkle helps a Somali organization collect weapons that local people turn in to be destroyed.

Rival warlords and militias have fought each other for control of Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, since the collapse of the Somali government in 1991. Machine guns are common weapons in this violence and are often available in local markets for as little as $30.

Christy Sprinkle, a Mennonite Central Committee worker in Mogadishu, is helping a Somali organization collect machine guns that local people turn in to be destroyed. SAACID, an MCC partner organization, is collecting machine guns from 512 militia members in exchange for vocational training. Sprinkle helps SAACID document the project by taking photos, shooting videos and writing reports.

"For the entire month of December militia (members) came daily to register, do interviews and test their weapons," Sprinkle says. "If the weapon fired, it was taken and they were told to show up to register for classes on Jan. 1."

Militia members are attending classes in literacy, basic math and business skills in exchange for giving up their machine guns. When the classes are finished, SAACID will destroy the guns in a public ceremony.

"People are ready for peace—and society has to reintegrate those fighters into society, when all they've known for years is the gun," Sprinkle says.

SAACID reports that the project has already had an effect on the prices of machine guns in local markets. Because fewer guns are available, they now cost about $150.

Sprinkle is from Austin, Texas, where she attended Austin Mennonite Church.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

Letters needed

The MCC Washington Office is inviting congregations to send at least 463 letters to Congress about immigration reform—one for every immigrant who died along the border in 2005. "Letters on the Line" is an online letter campaign that includes stories, tips for writing to lawmakers, a biblical reflection and other resources for churches. The campaign remembers immigrants who died along the border and provides congregations and individuals with suggestions for speaking out in response to an immigration reform bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in December 2005. HR 4437, also known as the Sensenbrenner-King bill, would make being in the country without immigration documents an aggravated felony and criminalize church workers and social service providers who assist undocumented immigrants. A revised version could reach the Senate floor as early as March 27. The goal of 463 letters is a symbolic gesture, meant to spur congregations to ponder the number of deaths along the border and to inspire them to act for change. Congregations or individuals who send letters are asked to notify the Washington Office. MCC's Web site will track how many letters have been sent. The address is www.mcc.org/lettersontheline.—*Larry Guengerich of Mennonite Central Committee*

gather 'ROUND
hearing & sharing God's good news

Curriculum Writers Wanted

Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News is accepting writer applications for its third curriculum year. A project of the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church Canada, and Mennonite Church USA, *Gather 'Round* will be available for congregational use beginning this fall.

Curriculum units are designed for Preschool (ages 3-4, with tips for 2s), Primary (grades K-2), Middler (grades 3-5), Multiage (grades K-6, with tips for older students), Junior Youth (grades 6-8), Youth (grades 9-12), and Parent/Caregiver.

Accepted writers will attend a writers conference October 15-19, 2006, and begin writing immediately thereafter. First quarter materials will be due by January 13, 2007. Writers generally commit to writing the entire curriculum year. Payment varies according to the writing requirements for each unit.

For an application, please contact the *Gather 'Round* project office at gatherround@brethren.org. Telephone: 847-742-5100. See the website at www.gatherround.org for product samples and more information.

Application deadline is May 31, 2006.

Brown will sing for orphans in Uganda

Hesston College artist-in-residence to have a music school named after him

Internationally acclaimed baritone Tony Brown hopes to bring hope and promote peace in Uganda when he embarks on a singing tour in the northern part of that country in June. Brown, artist-in-residence at Hesston (Kan.) College, will travel and sing in the northern district of Pader and the eastern district of Jinja at the request of Friends of Orphans (FRO).

FRO is a registered nongovernmental organization that addresses the urgent and long-term psychosocial needs of children, former abductees and child soldiers, women and orphans affected by the 19 years of conflict in northern Uganda.

"I've never been to Uganda," Brown says, "so I'm psyched to go. But I think it's going to be sobering when I'm connecting with so much pain in a place that has been besieged.

Larry Bartel

It's going to be sobering to be connecting with so much pain.
—Tony Brown

"One of the things music does is help people connect across divides of race, nationality, religion and culture. We find in those meetings our common humanity and sometimes we find a new way to think about each other. That will happen here, but it's a serious venture. Hopefully I'll be able to bring some hope and goodwill and promote peace between the factions in the region."

Anywar Ricky Richard, FRO founder and director, describes the Pader district in northern Uganda as the most under-served district in the north. It's also one of the fiercest zones in the war and the most rural. The vast majority of Pader's residents live in squalid internally displaced persons (IDP) camps where hunger, malnutrition, polluted drinking water, lack of education and vocational training and health services create a desperate situation for most residents.

FRO was founded in 1999 and is now governed and managed mostly by former child soldiers and former abductees from Uganda's 19-year war.

Richard, one of those former child soldiers, now has a business administration degree from the University of Makerere, located in Kampala City in central Uganda. FRO administers education and vocational training programs for children, orphans, former child soldiers, other vulnerable children and women in the IDP camp in Pader district, where 24,000 people are crammed into a small area. Most of the women are widows; many of the children are orphans. In addition to its programs in the Pader IDP camp, FRO provides HIV/AIDS education in other parts of Pader District.

FRO's vision is a restored northern Uganda where communities affected by conflict achieve their full potential. That vision includes the Anthony Brown Baritone School, and Brown will lay the foundation stone during his two-week tour. The school educates formerly abducted child mothers and former child soldiers, orphans of HIV/AIDS and war, and vulnerable children.

"I was shocked when I heard that," Brown says of the plans to name a school after him, "but it's a nice gesture on their part and I am honored by their generosity."—*Phil Richard of Hesston College*

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Sex trade in Phoenix enslaves teenagers

Mission Network's DEO worker helps those who have escaped the exploitation.

After going outside to meet a casual friend who had driven up with two older men, 15-year-old "Debbie" of Phoenix was pushed into their Cadillac. As the car sped away, the men tied Debbie up and threatened her. Debbie's captors drove her around the city for hours, until she was confused and exhausted. Then they raped her. To "break her" in preparation for prostitution, the men put her in a dog kennel and subjected her to further abuse. Then men started arriving at all hours of the day and night—arriving for Debbie. Her ordeal went on for more than 40 days before police, responding to a tip, broke down the door to the apartment. They found Debbie, terrified, hiding under the bed.

They took her to Arizonans for the Protection of Exploited Children and Adults (APECA).

Lisa Hostetler, a current DEO (Discipleship, Encounter, Outreach) participant, has been working with girls like Debbie during her service assignment at APECA.

"I have become more and more aware of the tragedy and just plain sickness and lack of respect for human life that comes with human trafficking and forced prostitution, especially with teens," Hostetler says.

Janet Olson, executive director for APECA in Phoenix, has begun a campaign to build Natalie's House, an eight-bed home to support girls ages 11-17 who are escaping from sexual exploitation and abuse. Teens at Natalie's House will receive shelter, food and clothing and take part in an intensive recovery program to help them make the transition to a normal, healthy life.

Hostetler is assisting Olson in conducting support groups and raising funds for Natalie's House.

According to Olson, there are a couple of homes already in place for adults in the Phoenix area. But younger girls are left to detention centers and foster homes. Natalie's House will be a safe haven with an internal classroom and courtyard so the girls can take classes and be outside without having to feel uncomfortable about who sees them and attending school with their peers.

The name Natalie's House was inspired by Natalie Grant, a popular Christian singer. Grant has seen human trafficking firsthand through travel to India and been inspired to speak to teen girls about self-esteem. APECA got permission to use her name for the house, and Grant will even help raise money for the program. Girls like Debbie now attend group support sessions with others who accept them. They talk about how anything that happens between an adult and a child is the adult's responsibility. Why should their situations be different? This is not their fault. They are not guilty.—*Rebekah Paulson of Mennonite Mission Network*

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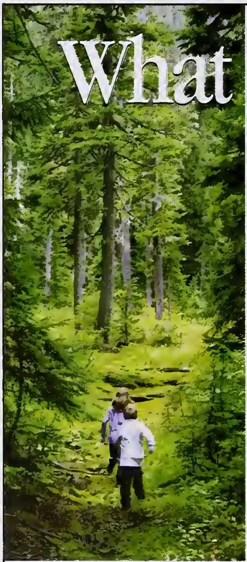

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Murder site now new church location

Drive-by shooting in 2001 sparked prayer vigils, church plant in Chicago.

An overflow crowd joined Living Water Community Church in dedicating its new meetinghouse Jan. 28 on Chicago's north side. The celebration marked a climax in the congregation's three-year process of acquiring a storefront building in a mini-mall, raising money for its renovation and purchase, and logging hours of volunteer time to transform the 6,500-square-foot, one-story building into holy space.

"We come from a tradition in which the worship space is called the meetinghouse and the people are called the church," said pastor Sally Schreiner Youngquist.

Living Water Community Church first turned its attention to the property when a drive-by shooting occurred outside the building in October 2001. A small group from the congregation began holding weekly peace prayer vigils on the street corner that is the site of the murder. When nudged by their host church to look for another home to rent or purchase for themselves, church members discerned a "call to the corner."

They began exploring purchase of this property in close proximity to where over 60 percent of the congregation resides. A loan from Reba Place Fellowship and Mennonite Mutual Aid made it possible for the 10-year-old church plant to purchase the property.—*Lisa Selph*

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"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

CALENDAR

Business as a Calling 2006: Set the Pace, Tampa, Fla., Nov. 2-5. **Mennonite Economic Development Associates.** For details, visit www.businessasacalling.org or call 800-665-7026.

CrossRoads (Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center) lecture for 2006, March 25, 7:30 p.m. ***Speaker will be Stephen L. Longenecker***, history professor at Bridgewater College. His working title is, "Brethren and Mennonites in the Midst of Other Religions in the Valley." The lecture will be held at Community Mennonite Church, 70 S. High St., Harrisonburg, Va.

Friends of Shirati, ***fund-raising banquet*** to support water and medical projects at Shirati Hospital, Tanzania, March 11, Mt. Joy, Pa., For information, call 717-299-5998 or friends-of-shirati@comcast.net.

Hymn Sing for Peace, April 1 at 2 p.m. in Lafayette Park across from the White House. Singers gather to share songs of peace with one another and as a witness to those who pass by. Sponsored by **Anabaptist Peace Center**, Washington D.C. For more information visit www.apcwdc.mennonite.net.

Mennonite Camping Association, ***Binational Convention***, March 20-23, Camp Friedenswald. Camp Friedenswald is located in southern Michigan near Cassopolis, not far from the northern Indiana border. Inspirational worship and music based on the Psalms—"Where Humanity Meets God"—will be led by Tom and Lois Harder, co-pastors of Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan.

"Tuned Out? A Conversation About Youth and the Future of News Media," March 17, Goshen (Ind.) College. All members of the **Council on Church and Media** are invited. David Mindich, author of *Tuned Out: Why Americans Under 40 Don't Follow the News*, will be the keynote speaker, and Brooke Gladstone, from MPR's "On the Media", will also be part of the conference after giving the Yoder Public Affairs lecture on campus the night before. For more information and online registration, visit http://www.goshen.edu/communication/tunedout.

WORKERS

Barber, Rose, was licensed and installed Feb. 5 as interim pastor of Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

Horst, Eric, began Jan. 30 as program director of Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Butterworth, Katherine Grace, Jan. 17, to Richard and Janelle Seitz Butterworth, Falls Church, Va.

Classen, Andrew William, Dec. 14, 2005, to Doug and Melissa Schrag Classen, Moses Lake, Wash.

Eby, Braden James, Jan. 4, to Duane and Jayne Oyer Eby, Fisher, Ill.

Eshleman, Janessa Elise, Dec. 27, 2005, to Thomas and Jennifer Beachy Eshleman, Akron, Pa.

Gouldey, Brooke Deanna, Jan. 28, to Bruce Jr. and Rhonda Leatherman Gouldey, Sellersville, Pa.

Hooley, Rachel Marie, Jan. 31, to Bruce and Sheri Hooley, Columbus, Ohio.

King, Eva Hope, Jan. 8, to Sam and Danelle Weaver King, Indianapolis.

McCracken, Tyler William, Feb. 10, to Nathan and Sandra Hostetler McCracken, Hartville, Ohio.

Meyer, Brodie Lee, Jan. 25, to Ryan and Heather Peitz Meyer, Wayland, Iowa.

Reichenbach, Claire Lynette, Feb. 8, to Brian and Heather Bachman Reichenbach, South Bend, Ind.

Rohrer, Taylor Marie, Jan. 31, to Benjamin and Genevive Bresson Rohrer, Orrville, Ohio.

Spragins, Ava Gregory, Dec. 21, 2005, to Mark and Heather Curling Spragins, Denver, Colo.

Troyer, Lily Mae, Feb. 3, to Travis and Chrissy Roberdes Troyer, Inola, Okla.

MARRIAGES

Brunk/Miller: George Brunk III, Harrisonburg, Va., and Ruthann Gardner Miller, Elkhart, Ind., Dec. 27, 2005, in Elkhart.

Dorsing/Gearhart: Jeromy Dorsing, Minneapolis, Minn., and Elizabeth Gearhart, Minneapolis, Dec. 30, 2005, at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Odenton, Md.

Friesen/Sawatzky: Brent Friesen and Tara Sawatzky, Feb. 4 at Altona (Man.) Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

McCullough/Troyer: Jamie McCullough, Milford, Neb., and Melissa Troyer, Milford, Feb. 4 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Penner/Versluis: Benjamin L. Penner, Ventura, Ca., and Anna J. Versluis, Worcester, Mass., Dec. 27, 2005, at Shalom Community Church, Ann Arbor, Mich.

DEATHS

Bachman, Oleta Dorothy Good, 84, Eureka, Ill., died Feb. 15. Spouse: Orville Bachman (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Bessie Kaufman Good. Children: Theodore, Frederick; five grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 18 at Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

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Becker, David D., 100, Aberdeen, Idaho, died Feb. 6. Spouse: Lizzie Unruh Koehn Becker. Parents: David and Elizabeth Schultz Becker. Children: Edith Isaak, Milton, Donald, Don; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 9 at First Mennonite Church, Aberdeen.

Bergthold, Hildur Ahlstrom, 87, Reedley, Calif., died Jan. 30. Spouse: Reuben Bergthold. Parents; Ephraim and Malin Ahlstrom. Children: Aleta Wedel, Bruce, Dean; eight grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 3 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Braun, Jank N., 82, Altona, Man., died Feb. 1. Spouse: Anita Hoffman Braun. Parents: John B. and Anna Braun. Children: Sharon Voth, Barry J., Marilyn Dick, Lorraine Nickel; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Buller, Elma Mierau, 86, North Newton, Kan., died Feb. 5. Spouse: Howard K. Buller. Parents: Cornelius J. and Maria Peters Mierau. Children: Ruth, Stanley, Charles; five grandchildren. Funeral: Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Eash, Levi (Lee), 68, Carlsbad, N.M., died Dec. 24, 2005. Spouse: Eileen Stichter Eash. Parents: Enos and Mary Hershberger Eash. Children: Joanna Harrison, John Kenton; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31, 2005, in Goshen, Ind.

Graber, Wilbert James, 89, Freeman, S.D., died Feb. 14. Spouse: Alice Rulla Graber. Parents: Jonathan and Louise Miller Graber. Children: Tim, Sharon Waltner; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 18 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Graham, Verna May, 76, Grodonville, Pa., died Dec. 23, 2005. Parents: Warren and Barbara Groff Graham. Funeral: Dec. 27 at Kinzer Mennonite Church, Kinzers, Pa.

Grieser, Beulah A., 94, Archbold, Ohio, died Feb. 9 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Truman Grieser (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Carrie Rupp King. Children: Janet Esh, Carol Martin, Ethel Swartzendruber; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at Fairlawn Chapel.

Gross, Erwin R., 83, Freeman, S.D., died Jan. 19. Spouse: Adella Kleinsasser Walter Gross. Parents: George J.C. and Mary Gross. Children: Donald, Harley, Derrick Walter, Vera Heiman, LaVern Walter, Errol Walter; 17 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Harter, Walter, 69, Elkhart, Ind., died Feb. 1. Spouse: Rita Hartman. Parents: Elmer and Lilly Newcomer Harter. Children: Susan Martin, Connie Clark, Cindy Grove; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 6 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Hershberger, Grace, 78, Davidsville, Pa., died Jan. 29. Parents: Milton and Anna Hershberger. Memorial service: Jan. 31 at Laurel View Village Vista Room.

Hershberger, Samuel Lee, 95, Peoria, Ariz., died Jan. 26. Spouse: Marie Yoder Hershberger. Parents: Ephraim and Dora Kempf Hershberger. Child: Donald; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Glencroft Community Church, Glendale, Ariz.

Hollinger, Edith Marie, 81, Lititz, Pa., died Feb. 7 of Alzheimer's disease. Spouse: Lloyd Leaman Hollinger. Parents: Harry S. and Elizabeth W. Rutt Horst. Children: Marilyn Weaver, Clyde, L. Kenneth, Rosanne Gingrich, Jane Good, Brenda Grimes, Ellen Kanagy; 19 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 11 at Stony Brook Mennonite Church, York, Pa.

Hummel, Brian J., 55, Millersburg, Ohio, died Feb. 16. Spouse: Karen Gerber Hummel. Parents: Paul and Mary Yoder Hummel. Children: Trent, Darrick; one grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Kauffman, Clara Fricke, 97, Hesston, Kan., died Feb. 8. Spouse: Milo Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Charles and Anna Dietrich Fricke. Children: Marilyn Kauffman Miller, Joy Kauffman Sears, Evelyn Kauffman Shellenberger, Gloria Kauffman Yoder, Milo F. Jr., Bonnie Kauffman Sowers, Phyllis Kauffman Hysong; 28 grandchildren; 35 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 11 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Kuttab, George M., 83, Wyncote, Pa., died Jan. 24. Spouse: Frocina Ibrahim Nesheiwat Kuttab. Children: Jonathan, Daoud, Lydia Brenneman, Samuel, Phoebe Wurst, Grace El-Yateem, Daniel; 24 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 28 at Calvary Assembly of God, Wyncote.

Ratzlaff, Harold Cecil, 94, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 10. Spouse: Ruth Regier Ratzlaff (deceased). Parents: J.C. and Mary Becker Ratzlaff. Child: Mary Ann Ratzlaff Jensen (deceased); two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 18 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Schlabach, Owen J., 84, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Feb. 5. Spouse: Mary Troyer Schlabach (deceased). Parents: Jonas and Susanna Troyer Schlabach. Children: Esther Warren, Clara, Frances Keim, Freda Troyer, Nancy Miller, Ray; 13 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 9 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Schmidt, Frederick Paul, 58, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 12. Spouse: Jo-Ann Enns Schmidt. Parents: Rudy and Luella Funk Schmidt. Children: Jeffrey, Rachel, Michael; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton.

Troyer, Royden R., 82, Milford, Neb., died Feb. 4. Spouse: Doreen Stutzman Troyer (deceased). Parents: John and Elsie Troyer. Children: Rod, Lynn, Trish McWain, Paula Pickerill; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 7 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

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Eyes at the Window, ***a novel by Evie Yoder Miller***

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Sharing Gifts in the Global Family of Faith, ***by Pakisa K. Tshimika and Tim Lind***

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Mennonite Disaster Service open positions:

MDS is expanding its binational staff as a result of the increased need following the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005. MDS will interview and hire qualified candidates to head the following areas, each reporting directly to the Executive Director:

Communications—Primary responsibility: to develop and administer a comprehensive communications plan to share the MDS message with the constituency and stakeholder communities as well as the general public, interpreting MDS philosophy/vision and promoting strong support.

Field operations—Primary responsibility: to manage all field operations and to assure effective and efficient team effort in all field relationships and activities in serving MDS "customers/clients" within the philosophy and resource parameters of MDS.

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Human resources—Primary responsibility: to assure prompt provision of qualified staff for all leadership positions and long-term volunteer positions and program needs. To enhance effective teamwork throughout the organization.

Address inquiries to: MDS Human Resources, Attn: Arleta Martin, 1018 Main St., Akron, PA 17501; email: jobs@mds.mennonite.net; phone: 717-859-2210, fax: 717-859-4910; http://www.mds.mennonite.net.

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Principal for **Hopi Mission School** beginning August 2006. Current enrollment of 50 Native American students in grades K through 6. Largely volunteer staff. The principal position is salaried, and the setting and situation are suitable for a retired or semiretired person. Previous teaching and/or administrative experience in an elementary school is highly desirable. Major responsibilities include mentoring and supervising teachers, many of whom are young and inexperienced but highly motivated; dealing with curriculum issues; establishing and managing discipline programs and relating to school board of local people. Housing, utilities and some meals furnished at no cost. Contact School Board President at P.O. Box 127, Kykotsmovi, AZ 86039; email hms@hopimissionschool.org; phone or fax 928-734-2453.

Dock Woods Community, a continuing-care retirement community located in Lansdale, Pa., is looking for a ***full- time activity coordinator*** for our Harmony House Nursing Unit. Job responsibilities include utilizing knowledge of organization and interpersonal communication skills in order to plan, organize, present and implement activities, which provide social, cognitive, creative, physical and spiritual benefit to the residents; planning, organizing, directing and presenting activities. In addition, this team member will be responsible for coordinating, orientating, supervising, instructing and developing volunteers in the activities department.

Dock Woods Community offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Interested candidates should send resumé along with salary requirements to the HR Dept. 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446 or fax to 215-565-2413. EOE www.dockwoods.com

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We are praying for a **couple to help oversee a small farm operation**, where guests come away to sit at the feet of Jesus. The farm is in the country on the commuter line between Washington, D.C. and Shepherdstown, W.Va. The couple would live on the farm rent free in a private suite for one year. Interested? Email Chris: ChristianHalverson@msn.com

Americus (Ga.) Mennonite Fellowship seeks a ***pastor***. It is a relatively small, thoughtful and vigorous congregation with Christ-centered diversity / Anabaptist orientation. Will support a pastor part-time and include housing costs. Americus is the city of Habitat for Humanity and Koinonia Partners, from which some employees and volunteers have joined this congregation (of Southeast Mennonite Conference). If open to conversation or wishing more info, please contact Myron Mast, chair of the search committee. Address: 145 Overlook Road, Americus, GA 31709 (email myronmast@bellsouth.net).

Provident Bookstores is accepting applications for the position of ***full-time business manager***. Provident Bookstores is a division of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) with headquarters in Lancaster, PA. The business manager will work cooperatively with the MPN controller in managing all financial activities of Provident Bookstores including financial operations in the individual stores. A degree in business and/or accounting is required. Applicants must support MPN and Provident Bookstores' mission and values as an Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian institution. Applications will be accepted until March 17, the position begins May 1, 2006. Applicants should apply to: Ken Reinford, Director, Provident Bookstores, 1625 Lititz Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601, email pbslanc@mph.org or fax 717-397-8299. The job description is posted at www.providentbookstores.com or can be obtained by contacting the Lancaster offices.

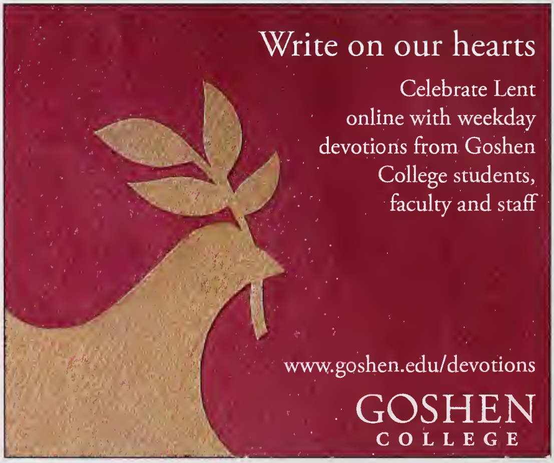
Tabor College seeks ***full-time faculty*** starting August 2006 for positions in ***mathematics and computer science***. Doctorates preferred. Passion for mentoring and advising undergraduate majors. Must affirm Tabor distinctives as an Anabaptist Evangelical Christian college and articulate personal Christian commitment. Complete position listings at www.tabor.edu. Send a letter of interest to lawrencer@tabor.edu.

Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church is seeking candidates for a current open position of full-time ***youth minister***. The youth minister gives pastoral leadership to a group of 50+ high-school-age students. Candidates should have a growing passion for their faith in Jesus, love of youth and the ability to lead a team of eight volunteer sponsors. The candidate would be part of a team of four other pastors. A bachelor's degree in youth ministries is preferred. Interested people should send a resumé to Tom Kauffman, Franconia Mennonite Church, 613 Harleysville Pike, Telford, PA 18969.

Full-time lead minister. **Waterloo North Mennonite Church** in Waterloo, Ont., is a dynamic, urban, multigenerational congregation with an average attendance of 250. Responsibilities include leading a ministry team that includes the associate minister (staff) and three lay ministers. The successful candidate will have a Master of Divinity, a commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, pastoral leadership experience and will be gifted in preaching, administration and pastoral care.

Apply by March 15 to: Waterloo North Mennonite Church, c/o Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister, 4489 King St. East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2. Phone 519-650-3806. Email muriel@mcec.ca

Lead pastor position for **Rohrerstown Mennonite Church**, near Lancaster, Pa. Seeking qualified candidate with strong preaching, nurturing, leadership and outreach skills to edify and revitalize our small congregation. Vision for new youth and family programs desired. P/T now, potential to grow into F/T as church grows. Contact search committee c/o Paul Heil, Box 1372, Lancaster, PA 17608, paul.s.heil@verizon.net.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RESOURCES

From Wild Man to Wise Man: Reflections on Male Spirituality by Richard Rohr with Joseph Martos (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005, $12.95) is a revised and updated edition of Rohr's **The Wild Man's Journey**. Rohr has added three new chapters that discuss John the Baptist, Paul and grief. An appendix provides a structure for a men's group, based on Rohr's work with Men as Learners and Elders.

An Introduction to the Russian Mennonites by Wally Kroeker (Good Books, 2005, $7.95) tells the story of Russian Mennonites from Catherine the Great's invitation to them to farm the Russian steppes in exchange for exemption from military service to their emigrations to where they are today.

Gospel Journey by Reba Praise is a CD of gospel music from Reba Place Church in Evanston, Ill. For more information go to www.rebapraise.com.

At Peace and Unafraid: Public Order, Security and the Wisdom of the Cross, edited by Duane K. Friesen and Gerald W. Schlabach (Herald Press, 2005, $19.99), explores principles and practices to guide Christians in living Jesus' way of nonviolent love in societies that often do not share their convictions.

Rethinking Holy Land: A Study in Salvation Geography by Marlin Jeschke (Herald Press, 2005, $16.99) is an alternative to the historical pattern of conquest and displacement of terrorized populations. His reading of the biblical narrative offers a redeeming view for stewarding space on God's earth.

Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley by Emmert F. Bittinger, David S. Rodes and Norman R. Wenger (Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center and Valley Research Associates, 2005, $49.95) is the third volume of a projected seven-volume history of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. To order write Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center, P.O. Box 1563, Harrisonburg, VA 22803 or email VRAssociates526@aol.com.

God's Advocates: Christian Thinkers in Conversation by Rupert Shortt (Eerdmans, 2005, $20) surveys the best of contemporary Christian thought from around the English-speaking world and beyond. Shortt's interviews introduce readers to 18 respected Christian thinkers who have contributed to a recent renaissance in theology.

Creation Set Free: The Spirit as Liberator of Nature by Sigurd Bergmann (Eerdmans, 2005, $38) creatively rethinks the discipline of theology in light of the global environmental crisis. He opens a dialogue between previous ecological theologies and church father Gregory Nazianzus.

Preparing Sunday Dinner: A Collaborative Approach to Worship and Preaching by June Alliman Yoder, Marlene Kropf and Rebecca Slough (Herald Press, 2005, $18.99) looks at how preachers and worship leaders can collaborate on a "Sunday dinner" of praise that feeds individual Christians and their communities.

The Thoughtful Christian is a newly launched online resource center located at www.TheThoughtfulChristian.com. The Web site already houses more than 50 units on topics ranging from same-sex marriage and the war in Iraq to a study on the book *The DaVinci Code*. The Thoughtful Christian is an imprint of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Individuals or churches may purchase studies or pay an annual subscription and download all studies desired.

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Mutual Aid Ministries Volunteer, Ron Jantzi (Olathe, KS), helping to rebuild the Lakota Gospel Church in Porcupine, SD after a fire in June of 2004.

A father reflects

It began as a side comment, in the midst of a busy meeting somewhere. Later we sat down to extend the reflection along the lines of a theme that interests me. Where were those toughest points in parenting youth into young adults? How did you handle those choices? What aspects of training for freedom and responsibility cannot be managed by parents alone?

I'll never forget the day I had to accompany her into court for the DUI, he said. Totaled the car. It cost a fortune in insurance for the whole family. She had to get a job and pay for the entire bill herself. We didn't have peers to walk alongside us in a young congregation.

Here's his story:

I grew up in a Mennonite home, but it wasn't quite typical. Some said it was permissive, even though what they couldn't see was disciplined. We didn't have a long leash, but it was clear what we could or could not do. I got into a smoking habit during high school. My dad discovered it and called me in for a long chat. He said he'd done the same thing himself, but then he went on to talk about the health risks. As usual in these cases, my parents didn't opt to punish us kids but warned us about the consequences. The bottom line was that they let us know when we were doing things they didn't approve of. But they wanted to know what we did and keep communication open in the process.

So my wife and I hoped to follow the same patterns, if we could, with our teenagers as they came along. Things are different today, but we wanted to instill strong values and keep the communication open. One of our daughters was outgoing. But we encouraged them both to speak out and say what they believed, even if it was different from the patterns of their peers.

I had my reservations when guys with cars came "sniffing around," as I put it. Some of the friends were not a good influence, and we would not have chosen them. We tried to talk about our values being different, and we kept talking about that. But our daughters made their own choices.

And some things didn't turn out well at all. The "driving under the influence of alcohol" incident was the proverbial straw that almost broke the camel's back. She was arrested, went to jail, and I had to go and bail her out. I sure could have lowered the boom then, but we decided to hang in there, and we loved them right through this. She lost her insurance and had to pay for a special at-risk program; she could drive only to and from work.

This all turned out pretty hard on her, but she took stock, made some changes, and we saw the difference. Her next serious friendship was with a young man who was quiet, steady and had no use for alcohol. They dated a few years, then married, and it was a calming influence on her. Her faith ended up making a big difference for her, too.

We had no idea at the time where all these things would go, but hanging in there and keeping the communication open made all the difference.

We had no idea at the time where all these things would go, but hanging in there and keeping the communication open made all the difference. We are closer now than when she was in high school.

At the time, we felt we were in this alone. We got some counseling sessions but didn't find them helpful. The most help actually came from our pastor, who knew how to listen and made himself available at any time.

I want to give a lot of credit to my wife. Her wisdom and patience were amazing in all of this. I marvel at her sensitivity. She is a prayer warrior, and she's had a calming influence on me.

Now our daughters have their own children to raise. And both are displaying remarkable skills in their professions. They handle the tough cases, confront when necessary and manage to say the hard things while showing a real tenderness.

You're never finished being a parent. You may be older now, and wiser. But the guilt about tough times in the past can drag you down. It is important to be free and pray for forgiveness.

And then my friend ended the conversation on a sober, reflective note of relief about getting through. The young adults now see how good they had it, he said. They return with their own kids to share the burdens with the grandparents. TM

Gerald Shenk teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

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Sharon Kennel, West Regional Conference Minister of Central Plains Mennonite Conference with her husband, Cecil, on their Nebraska farm.

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Sharon Kennel knows what it takes to grow a strong conference, and she's working to ensure the yields are good. By helping cultivate Central Plains Conference into a productive organization, people like Sharon are creating a structure that encourages, strengthens and affirms congregations. God meant for us to work together – not in isolation from one another.

The 21 area conferences of Mennonite Church USA gain strength and courage from each other. Sharon and other conference leaders network and share information, ideas, visions and goals. They learn from each other by setting standards, ensuring accountability and providing resources for congregations. Though community may take a different shape from one congregation – or conference – to another, it ultimately helps the whole denomination grow.

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Gordon Houser

The consumer God

One task of the church is to help its youth and young adults grow into adulthood with a coherent and vibrant faith. To do that, church members need to exhibit a coherent and vibrant faith.

The church is always one generation away from extinction. We must learn how to pass on the faith.

In her book *Thank You for Asking: Conversations with Young Adults about the Future Church* (Herald Press, 2005, $14.99), Sara Wenger Shenk, a columnist for *The Mennonite*, refers to Steven Garber's three elements that allow young adults to "make it into mature adulthood with a coherent faith and an integrity of being." These young adults form a worldview that is sufficient for the questions and crises they will face, find a teacher who puts such a worldview in practice, and live out their worldview "in the company of mutually committed folk who [provide] a network of friendship, stimulation and support."

Such passing on of the faith has been happening and continues to happen. But it has also failed to happen, and the faith that gets passed on is at times weak or even, dare I say, idolatrous.

Bob Yoder reports (page 8) on the book *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton (Oxford University Press, 2005, $25), which shares the findings from the National Study of Youth and Religion. This study discovered that the single most important influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents.

We adults need to exhibit to youth a vibrant faith in the God Jesus revealed, not the consumer God of American culture.

For parents who fear their children will wander off the beaten track, this will feel encouraging. It can also feel scary, if we don't have our act together. Another finding from the study is that teenagers tend to espouse a religious outlook that is distinct and different from traditional faith commitments of most U.S. religious traditions. This can be described as Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD).

Teens believe God wants people to be good and nice, that the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself and that God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when needed to resolve a problem.

For the most part, American adults have passed on to their children a belief in a consumer God, one who is not too involved in the world, except to meet our needs.

This is not the Holy God revealed in Scripture. This consumer God will not sustain us through suffering, will not challenge us to live holy lives. Such a God is not an awesome mystery but someone we dial up to get what we want.

In order to raise children who are not MTDs, we adults need to be not MTDs ourselves but faithful followers of Jesus.

The testimony of Mark Horst (page 12) and Emily Derstine (page 13) raises themes that Shenk and her team of researchers uncovered among young adults as well. Youth want adult mentors. Horst writes, "The church should strive to connect youth with strong Christian adults so youth can learn from mature Christians."

Derstine writes of her passionate desire to follow Jesus. Shenk echoes this interest among the young adults her team heard from. She writes, "Together we must construct a more viable theological framework that will free us all both to follow Jesus wholeheartedly and to truly honor and love our neighbors."

Sallie Reed (page 14) raises a third theme in regard to what both youth and young adults want: to be met where they are. This means listening to their questions without judgment. Shenk writes that young adults want to be part of "communities that are open to questions, communities that are malleable and nondogmatic."

If our youth are to grow into adulthood with a coherent and vibrant faith, we adults need to live out such a faith and be in open and honest discussion with them. We need to exhibit faith in the God Jesus revealed, not the consumer God of American culture.—*gh*

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Pride: the spiritual cancer

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

The foremost of the seven deadly sins is pride. C.S. Lewis called it the great sin, because all other sins can be traced back to it, though nobody ever admits to having it. Pride is a sneaky spiritual cancer, easy to see in others but almost impossible to detect in ourselves. However, there are early warning indicators.

The itch for recognition. I crave admiration and attention, though outwardly I am reticent to put myself forward. Publicly I say I don't want any recognition, but inwardly I hope that people, not only notice, but will tell me how wonderful and amazing I am.

Jesus warned that this itch for recognition may infect our spiritual practices. In Matthew 6 Jesus says, "Don't do your giving to the Lord in order to maximize public recognition. Don't blow trumpets when you are helping the poor." Pride can infect us even when we are at our best in serving the Lord. Why do I want to serve on the church board? Why do I want to lead worship? It's even possible to be the center of attention by being the contrarian of the congregation or committee.

Pride is preoccupation with and inordinate assertion of self. Good pride is loving yourself. Sinful pride is being in love with yourself.

The press to be No. 1. C.S. Lewis writes in *Mere Christianity* that pride is essentially competitive. It gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next person. We may say people are proud of being rich, smart or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, smarter or better-looking than others.

For some of us, pride sneaks in by driving the newest, most powerful SUV. For others it comes in driving the oldest, most economical, most frugal or green vehicle.

Masquerade of spirituality. Pride will masquerade as devout spirituality. Remember the two men who went up to pray in the Temple (Luke 18). The Pharisee prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like all other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a 10th of all I get." That is not a prayer but a brag sheet.

C.S. Lewis writes in *Mere Christianity*: "As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you. … Whenever we find that our religious life is making us feel we are good—above all, that we are better than someone else, we may be sure that we are being acted on, not by God, but by the devil" (111). What is the chemo for this cancer of pride?

Practice repentance. The despised tax collector prayed, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." I find this prayer a helpful antidote to the poison of spiritual pride. Pastors may be more tempted by spiritual pride than others. I find myself praying this prayer repeatedly.

Repentance names the pride and calls it sin. It may be pride about moving up the social ladder, about your family's roots in Prussia or the Ukraine, about school, sports or work achievements, about children or grandchildren, about spiritual disciplines. Pride expects special treatment and preferred regard at church or at work or in the home. Pride looks around and says, "I thank God I don't have the problems of those people."

The Bible says, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (1 Peter 5:6 NIV).

Practice sincerely thanking God. Thanking God is the antidote to the poison of pride. Recognize that every good gift, ability and abundant blessing comes from the Almighty Creator (James 1:17). Everyday thank God for the blessings and the goodnesses of your life. It's not about you. It's all about God. It's all from God.

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 6, March 21, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Cover: Capture Photography adaptation by Dee Birkey

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 40033185, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Real and deadly sin

Re "Sin Is Real and Deadly" (Grace and Truth, Feb. 21): I am so impressed that Clarence Rempel spoke up on a silent issue within the church: sin. Some people are uncomfortable even mentioning sin because someone may feel offended. I sin. I am saved, yet still I sin. I don't think a day goes by when I am not guilty of some sin. Oh, I don't cheat or murder or lie or take God's name in vain, but I am sometimes prideful, thinking I am really something. Some days I am angry or lazy. Some days I put money ahead of God. Sin is in me, and only because I have acknowledged my sins before God and accepted that without the redemption of the cross, I am not lost forever.—*Cindi Newcomb, Marion, S.D.*

Clarence E. Rempel's article was so biblically sound and so well written. I look forward to his articles over the next two years on the "Seven Deadly Sins." And in the same vein, I appreciated the letter "Changing the Definition of Sin" by Jewel Showalter (Readers Say, Feb. 21).—*Wayne D. Lawton, Elizabethtown, Pa.*

Sharing in worship

Thank you to Arthur Paul Boers for having the courage to address the problematic issue of sharing time ("Thank You for Zebra Mussels, Asian Ladybugs and Sharing?" Feb. 21). I have long been frustrated by this element of our worship time. Boers rightly points out that a few people tend to dominate with long discourses on family, politics or the medical maladies of acquaintances. And why, I have often wondered, do those leading the sharing time feel obliged to restate during the prayer what has just been said? Certainly there are items that should be shared and prayed over with caring people in the congregation. I believe, however, that smaller groups are more appropriate for most concerns.

I hope congregations will take time to discuss the many valid concerns Boers raises with this article. For those who conclude that sharing time should be retained, I offer this suggestion: Schedule sharing time to start 15 minutes before the worship service. Those who desire can meet together for sharing and prayer. They can then join others in the congregation to worship through the sharing of God's Word.—*Jeni Hiett Umble, Indianapolis*

Although Arthur Paul Boers makes some important points about out-of-control sharing, his concern is misplaced. The problem is not the sharing itself but the size of the church within which it takes place. Put simply: Sharing does not work as well in a large church as in a small one.

As one who comes to the Mennonite church from outside, I have always found sharing a unique and key part of my Mennonite worship experience. The church I attend is small, attendance is never more than 40, and something important would be lost if we limited the sharing. In a group this size, sharing can be a deeply religious act. Can this type of intimate sharing occur in a group of over 100? I doubt it. But perhaps the problem is not the sharing itself but the size of our congregations.—*Mitchell Brown, Wilmette, Ill.*

While I can understand and sympathize with Arthur Paul Boers' parting counsel, the rest of the article seems extremely harsh and contradictory. Boers calls sharing a "non-native invader that distorts worship and becomes impossible to dislodge." But Jesus calls us to integrate our faith with our life. What better way to do this than sharing during worship? Without it, the worship service can become so removed from our own lives, that we forget the nearness of the situations that should engage our faith.

Boers highlights sharing that is individualistic and depressing. What about churches that use the time to pray for our brothers and sisters around the world? What about individuals who use the time to share how the sermon profoundly affected them? Boers also laments the lack of discernment in sharing compared with the highly planned remainder of the service. But by removing all unplanned contributions, wouldn't we also be

IN THIS ISSUE

Lenten season is a time to reflect on our sinfulness and prepare ourselves for the joy of our salvation from sin on Easter Sunday morning. Although there are many ways to sin (as Cindi Newcomb says on this page), a helpful Lenten exercise is to focus on one specific sin. So in this issue we focus on sexual temptations and the rewards of chastity. Recently married Laurie Oswald Robinson (page 8) describes the journey she and her husband traveled when they decided to wait until they were married to consummate their relationship. Gerald and Marlene Kaufman offer counsel about how to remain chaste in work relationships rather than letting friendships "go too far" (page 11). The editorial examines Jesus' teaching about committing adultery in our hearts and suggests that all of us—no matter what we've done in the past—can repent, be forgiven and again hold on to chastity. Finally, in sad, late-breaking news, we report that the body of Tom Fox, a Christian Peacemaker Teams worker in Iraq, was found March 9 in Baghdad. Three CPTers are still being held.—*Editor* potentially inhibiting the Holy Spirit? At my church, sharing time is a meaningful place for community, support and an opportunity to use the concepts learned from Jesus' teaching.—*Annali Smucker, Akron, Pa.*

Arthur Paul Boers' article on sharing during worship was informative while raising some of the same issues I've struggled with as a pastor in charge of leading a congregation toward worship. I would call for no sharing time in Sunday morning worship in part because it interrupts the flow and the focus of what worship is about. Also, within the community of faith there are several other settings where personal sharing has a place—such as small groups or Sunday school classes. Isn't it possible, for one short space of time in our week, to move past our narcissism and focus on the God we have gathered to worship? Can we relearn what it means to be one body with one mind centered on worshiping the God who has called us together?—*Dayvid Graybill, Wadsworth, Ohio*

Thank you for the article on sharing in worship. My congregation has found sharing to be a crucial part of our service, although its inclusion in the service has not come without controversy. Occasionally, a member will use sharing time to air a grievance they have with another member, which is uncomfortable and, yes, even inappropriate. Although, with the church no longer the center of a community's life, it's no wonder that sharing has become essential to many Mennonite worship services. Without Wednesday services and other opportunities to be connected to each other, sharing may be the one time in a week a person has to make a connection with other believers. This says more about our need to minister to each other (including the emotionally needy in the congregation) than it does about the few people who may share too much or share inappropriately. While every church has to work it out for themselves, our congregation will be keeping it in our worship service. As uncomfortable as it may be at times, it's a humbling reminder of the needs of all our members.—*Amy Yoder McGloughlin, Philadelphia*

God's grace for human needs

Christians have a long history of adjusting our understanding of God's will for us as revealed in the Scriptures, beginning with a bitter struggle over circumcision (see Acts 15). Since the 1950s, most Mennonites have adjusted our view of divorce: We no longer see it as an unforgivable sin, and we no longer believe that God condemns people for being divorced and remarried. Can we learn from history? Should we vilify those churches that first accepted divorced people as members, or should we praise them for their courage in leading us to a higher understanding of God's grace? And should we vilify Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church and other congregations for polluting the church, or should we praise them for applying God's grace to human need?—*Ray Elvin Horst, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Dialogue is also teaching position

Karl Landis voiced a concern about congregations redefining sin in order to welcome practicing gays and lesbians (Readers Say, Feb. 7). He mistakenly bases his argument on our confession of faith. Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective does not explicitly refer to homosexuality, let alone define homosexual activity as sin. It is in our denominational membership guidelines that it is stated to be a teaching position. But a teaching position should neither bear weight equivalent to the confession of faith nor require the blanket exercise of church discipline.

The membership guidelines also include a teaching position calling us to be in dialogue with those who have differing views. Being in dialogue is not the equivalent of calling one another to repentance.—*Esther Robie, Durham, N.C.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

My congregation discusses sexuality: (59 votes)

○ In ways that are helpful (20%)

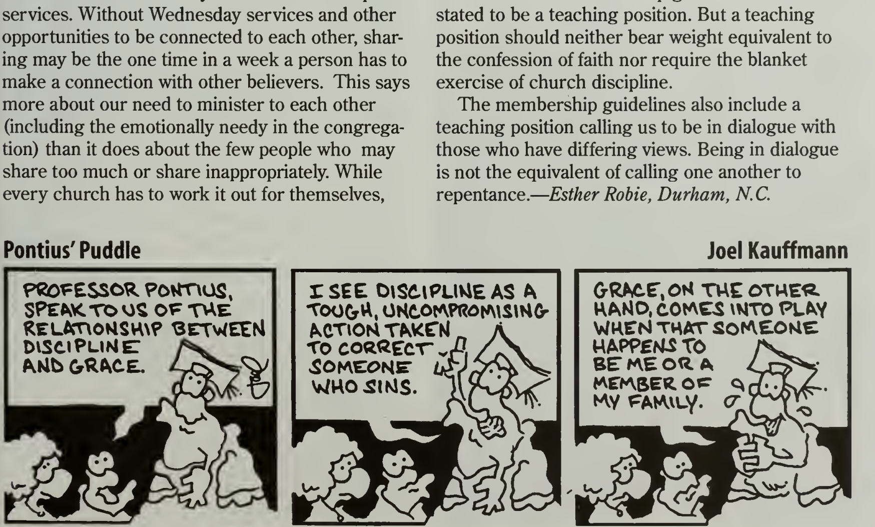
○ In ways that are not helpful (3%)

○ Seldom or never (69%)

○ Don't know (7%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


PROFESSOR PONTIUS, SPEAK TO US OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISCIPLINE AND GRACE.
I SEE DISCIPLINE AS A TOUGH, UNCOMPROMISING ACTION TAKEN TO CORRECT SOMEONE WHO SINS.
GRACE, ON THE OTHER HAND, COMES INTO PLAY WHEN THAT SOMEONE HAPPENS TO BE ME OR A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY.

IN BRIEF

Canadian Mennonite wins five Olympic medals

With five medals from the Winter Olympics, Canadian Mennonite Cindy Klassen was declared "the woman of the Games" as the competition closed Feb. 26. Klassen, 26, who earned a gold, two silver and two bronze medals in women's speed skating, was the most decorated athlete at Turin, Italy, and tied for the record of most medals earned during a single Winter Games. She is a member of McIvor Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg. *—Mennonite Weekly Review*

Weaver named MSMC conference minister

Mountain States Mennonite Conference has confirmed Herm Weaver as its conference minister, effective Aug. 1. Weaver, Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., has degrees from Hesston (Kan.) College, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, a master's degree in community counseling from the University of Akron and a doctorate in psychology and peace studies from The Union Institute. Weaver taught psychology at EMU until last year. He also has facilitated a pastoral support network, led in congregational activities, served as an associate pastor and worked with youth in several settings.*—Mennonite Church USA*

Conference focuses on 'Farming With Values'

MT. PLEASANT, Pa.—"Farming With Values That Last: Models for the Journey," held Feb. 24-26, brought together people of faith to explore viable options for the future of farming and living in community. The conference, the third of its kind, drew more than 120 people.

Many workshops focused on practical tips for boosting the economic potential of small and sustainable farms, such as woodlot management, creative composting, organic bramble production and farm-to-city retailing.

Keynote speaker David Kline, an Amish organic dairy farmer and author from Fredericksburg, Ohio, developed a sense of "common heritage," referencing the Anabaptist agrarian roots in the Alsace and commending many of our ancestors for their care and restoration of the land by adding leguminous clover to their mountainside pastures.

Conference-goers enjoyed several sustainably raised and local food items throughout the weekend, including lamb stew, mesclun mix, herbed potatoes, all-natural ice cream and homemade strawberry jam.

Erin Clymer and Nick Hurst led storytelling, poetry and hymn singing. S. Roy Kaufman, who has pastored rural churches in Iowa, Illinois, Saskatchewan and South Dakota, led worship and offered devotionals.*—Susanna Meyer*

Everett J. Thomas

Empty chairs at MWC because visas denied

Mennonite World Conference president Nancy Heisey and MWC executive secretary Larry Miller stand behind 15 empty chairs with the names of 15 MWC delegates from Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela who were denied visas to enter the United States. Consequently they were unable to participate in the MWC meetings held March 7-16 in Pasadena, Calif. In a statement the MWC General Council said their absence "causes us great sadness but also frustrates our continuing global Christian witness." The statement calls on U.S. immigration authorities "to supply a full explanation as to why they did not allow the 15 delegates to come to Pasadena" and asks U.S. Mennonite churches to voice disapproval of their government's decision. Our next issue will include more coverage of MWC.*—Everett J. Thomas*

Peacemakers help save Nigerian city

International protests against cartoons of the prophet Muhammad inflamed tensions between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, sparking deadly riots in late February that claimed at least 138 lives in several cities.

Gopar Tapkida

There was widespread fear that riots would break out in many other parts of the country, including Jos, a central Nigerian city with a recent history of interreligious violence.

But local Muslim and Christian peacemakers worked together to reduce tensions in Jos through face-to-face meetings and cell phone text messaging. These efforts, as well as government security measures, prevented a violent confrontation in Jos, according to Gopar Tapkida, a Mennonite Central Committee peace worker in the city.

Ever since interreligious riots erupted in Jos in 2001 and killed about 900 people, Tapkida and others have worked to teach peacemaking skills to Christians and Muslims in the region. He helped form groups of Christian and Muslim peacemakers in Jos and in the surrounding Plateau state.

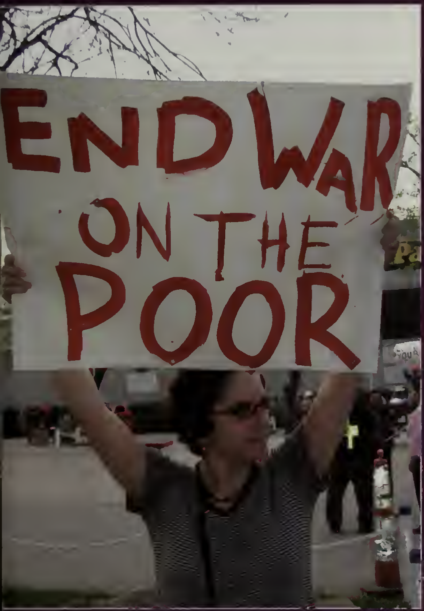
Tapkida says the recent violence in Nigeria reflects longstanding political divisions between Christians and Muslims. Nigeria's population is divided about equally between the two religions.

He earned a master's degree in conflict transformation from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.*—Mennonite Central Committee*

MCC helps prevent bird flu in Vietnam

Mennonite Central Committee has helped northern Vietnamese farmers and health workers take steps to prevent the transmission of bird flu during an outbreak of the disease this winter.

At least 42 people have died of bird flu in Vietnam since a deadly strain of the disease emerged in the country's poultry in 2003. All known human cases of bird flu in recent years have resulted from contact with animals, but the World Health Organization warns that the disease



CPT photo

wall no war’

ndy Lehman of Christian Peacemaker Teams takes part in a . 16 vigil in Brownsville, Texas, sponsored by CPT Border- ds delegation and supporters from a local peace coalition. vigil took place on the bridge that spans the Rio Grande er, connecting Brownsville and the city of Matamoros, naulipas, at a time in the afternoon when many people re crossing. The delegation was responding to recent U.S. use of Representative legislation that would put up another miles of wall to separate the United States and Mexico further the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border.—*CPT*

may spread, causing a global pandemic.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Scholar considers Judaism and Christianity

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Daniel Boyarin, Taubman professor of Talmudic culture in the departments of Near Eastern studies and rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley, on Feb. 28 spoke at Bluffton University. He argued that Judaism and Christianity were a single entity until Jews who followed Jesus and Jews who did not began to distinguish themselves from one another. It is not that Jews and Christians had no differences but that their differences did not result in excommunication. Boyarin said that Christians and Jews have spent more time constructing borders and defining exact beliefs than embracing their commonalities. Those borders are what he wrote about in one of his books, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Boyarin spoke about the past decade in which he spent researching the Jewish-Christian schism and the work of John Howard Yoder, a biblical scholar best known for his radical Christian pacifism, his loyalty to the Mennonite faith and his 1972 book *The Politics of Jesus*. Boyarin's research paralleled Yoder's and became the foundation for *Border Lines.—Bluffton University*

MMA board names succession committee

GOSHEN, Ind.—At its meeting Feb. 25, the MMA Board of Directors named members to its presidential succession committee.

The committee includes Patricia Swartzendruber (chair), member, MMA board, Harrisonburg, Va.; Natalie Francisco, member, MMA board, Chesapeake, Va.; Sue Miller, co-owner, Das Dutchman Essenhaus, Middlebury, Ind.; Duane Oswald, former moderator, Mennonite Church USA, Fresno, Calif.; David von Gunten, member, MMA board, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Arlan Yoder, chair, MMA board, Hesston, Kan.; Jim Schrag (ex-officio member), executive director, Mennonite Church USA, Newton, Kan. Up to two more at-large members may be named.—*MMA*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

HESSTON
COLLEGE
24

Larry Bartel

Sowers sets Hesston scoring record

Sophomore forward Liz Sowers set two Hesston (Kan.) College records during the 2005-06 season. She scored 1,100 points for her career, exceeding the previous record of 1,041 points by Lisa Schmidt Graber during the 1995-96 and the 1996-97 seasons. Sowers also broke the single-season scoring mark of 569 points set by Graber during the 1996-97 season. Sowers finished with 606 points for the 2005-06 season.—*Hesston College*

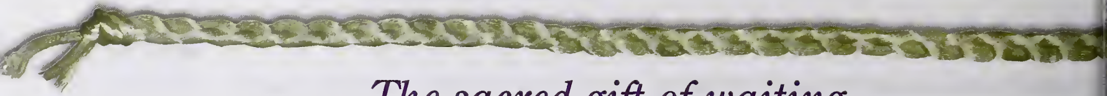
IN BRIEF

Cardinal Mahony calls for civil disobedience

Cardinal Roger Mahony of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the nation's largest, urged parishioners on Ash Wednesday to devote the 40 days of Lent to fasting, prayer and reflection on the need for humane reform of immigration laws. If current efforts in Congress make it a felony to shield or offer support to illegal immigrants, Cardinal Mahony said, he will instruct his priests—and faithful lay Catholics—to defy the law. The cardinal's focus of concern is H.R. 4437, a bill sponsored by James Sensenbrenner Jr. of Wisconsin and Peter King of New York. The legislation, passed by the House in February, would expand the definition of "alien smuggling" in a way that could theoretically include working in a soup kitchen, driving a friend to a bus stop or caring for a neighbor's baby.—*New York Times*

War economics

Projected total cost of the Iraq war, according to a January study: about $2 trillion. Prewar cost estimate, which was rejected at the time by a White House economic advisor as being "very, very high": $200 billion.



The sacred gift of waiting

The wipers sloshed across the windshield pelted with an Iowa storm. Alfonso, my soon-to-be fiancée, focused on the road as his jaw tightened. I fumbled with my cell phone, failing to reach my friend, whose home we were to stay in one night during our trip.

If I didn't find her, we'd have to get a hotel. Given our commitment to wait until marriage to share full physical intimacy—this was not good. Money was tight, and one room was all we could afford. One of us could sleep on the floor, right? Yeah, right.

"What's wrong, honey?" I asked, feeling wound up like a tangled ball of yarn.

"Nothing. Nothing. I'm fine," he said, fixated on the road.

"That's not true," I cried, tears falling. "We both know that everything isn't fine."

Silence flooded the small space, but we finally spoke. We feared staying in a hotel would heighten the growing sexual tensions between us. Even though we were middle-aged, we believed chastity for us meant reserving sexual intercourse for marriage.

God's mercy, mutual convictions and good Christian support systems granted us the grace and fortitude to wait until our wedding day to share our bodies totally.

Many waters cannot quench love

by Laurie Oswald Robinson with Alfonso Robinson

I finally reached my friend. After a long, winding journey on back roads in the dark, we reached her home—and slept in separate rooms. Soon after the incident, we were engaged in late December 2004. In the next nine months until our wedding day, Sept. 10, 2005, our commitment was tested often and intensely. God's mercy, mutual convictions and good Christian support systems granted us the grace and fortitude to wait until our wedding day to share our bodies totally.

This story is an oddity in secular circles and an increasing rarity in Christian communities. A prevailing view is that love is the premiere moral marker. If two people love each other and are committed for life, then a full sharing of bodies is OK before the wedding. If two mature people have had other relationships, it's seen as nearly impossible, even harmful, to wait.

There's a reason for these views—including the fact that people don't want to stomach the stormy sea of sensations and white-knuckled discipline needed to navigate such waters. A verse in our wedding ceremony, Song of Songs 7:7, says, "Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away." In humility, we offer three perspec-

Courtesy photo

Intimacy: Laurie and Alfonso on their wedding day

tives that kept us from drowning in the raging rivers of a God-given passion.

Keep the backpack light for a freer journey ahead.

A Feb. 20 *Newsweek* story featured love lives of American middle-aged people. Recent statistics show 20 percent of older singles have sex once a week or more. An additional 20 percent have sex daily. Many past mistakes on both our parts taught us that the world's ways don't work when it comes to sexual intimacy. Alfonso was married once before and in the previous eight years had been healing from that break. I also had experienced much brokenness after a string of illicit relationships that failed to lead to commitment.

"In my past, the physical part of our relationships always ran away with me," Alfonso said one day when discussing the level of physicality we would permit. "I had quick physical satisfaction but little else. I often ended up feeling empty.

"I want it to be different with you. You are a gift, and I don't want to hurt you. God has given me a second chance. Waiting for intercourse would be my gift back to God."

One evening after dinner, I knew it was my turn to talk. I admitted that my lifestyle had left me badly damaged. But then God provided ministers who led me to Christ and his cross for healing. Through Spirit-guided prayer to those wounded places, Jesus took my pain, as I confessed my sins and those of others and forgave it all. These prayer times brought new wholeness and healthier relating and made commitment feasible.

A thousand tears and dozens of Kleenexes later, we decided we wanted our relationship to heal wounds—not add new ones. Why add more baggage to backpacks God had emptied for the purpose of making us freer and more whole?

I now experience much security in our married sexual relationship. I don't grapple with guilt of having gone too far in courtship. Neither do I resent being pushed beyond my limits before we sealed our sacrament before God and others. Occasionally, I hit a roadblock built from an unhealed wound I incurred before Alfonso. But most often, our times of sexual intimacy are connective and joyful.

Realize "boundary" is not a dirty word but a building block.

As many evenings ended, we parted with kisses and cuddling without fondling—and kept our clothes on. We set that boundary after reading some books on courtship and dating. One book suggested there are 10 steps leading to sexual intercourse. In honoring the above boundary—Step Five—we were less likely to end up in bed. Once flesh is fondled, the slippery slope gets too steep, the author suggested.

Other books discussed differences between men and women, such as that men are often more physical and women more verbal. Our boundary was a middle ground honoring both our needs. A deep kiss was worth a thousand words for him. A thousand words would lead me to want to cuddle.

We decided we wanted our relationship to heal wounds—not add new ones.

There were times when one and/or both of us attempted to push our boundary. But subsequent prayer and dialogue kept fires from blazing out of control and restored mutual trust and resolve.

Keeping physicality contained helped us focus on the emotional and spiritual aspects of our relationship. We wanted and needed to be close. And this desire for closeness drew us more fully into praying together, communicating, worshiping, playing and sharing our extended families. Since flames of our passion did not engulf us, its heat and light created gold for a lifetime rather than ashes of a fleeting moment.

Take sexuality out of the bedroom and into the Body of Christ.

A summary of Article 19 in the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective says, "As single

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

and married members of the church family give and receive nurture and healing, families can grow toward the wholeness that God intends. We are called to chastity and to loving faithfulness in marriage." A full-length version of Article 19 states, "Sexual union takes place only within the marriage relationship."

I knew a coitus-free engagement wouldn't win us crowns in heaven and surely not kudos from friends who thought we were crazy.

I often thought, If we slept together, who would really care? Who would know? I knew a coitus-free engagement wouldn't win us crowns in heaven and surely not kudos from friends who thought we were crazy. Nevertheless, we felt what we did with our bodies mattered to the Body of Christ, as the confession suggests.

This restraint helped us stand in solidarity with all Christians—married or single—called to a chastity that honors a whole sexuality. Sexuality doesn't begin and end with genitals. Hugging our loved ones in wholesome ways, worshiping with our hearts and voices and serving with our hands express our sexual selves, created in the image of God.

Writings of the late John Paul II helped me understand this concept. "In the Pope's language, God is an eternal communion of persons," says Christopher West, in *Theology of the Body for Beginners* (Ascension Press, 2004). "A 'common union' (communion) of persons is established to the degree that two more persons mutually give themselves to one another in love and service."

On Feb. 10, Alfonso and I celebrated our six-month anniversary, marveling at the communion of persons God is creating in our home. In the midst of many adjustments and imperfections, we are grateful for the long voyage that brought us to a safe port. Many waters did not quench our love but served to fill an infinite ocean with God's living waters. We will share that abundance as long as we continue to give ourselves—bodies, minds and souls—in a lifetime sacrament of mutual donation and reception of gift.

Laurie Oswald Robinson works for Mennonite Women USA and is editor of Timbrel.

Lifetime sacrament: Alfonso and Laurie on their wedding day

Courtesy photo

Workplace affairs can be devastating both to families and co-workers.

Mennonite leaders in business and management play an important role in defining the workplace culture. They set the tone through wages, benefits, working conditions and in many other ways. They are concerned with maintaining high ethical standards and honesty and with delivering a high-quality product or service.

Owners and managers also need to see themselves as spiritual caretakers of their employees. The tone they set for the workplace can have a profound effect. In this high calling they lead by example. Employers need to demonstrate integrity and fidelity in their personal lives. The lifestyle they choose is on public display and says a great deal about what is expected of employees. Employers need to radiate a positive faith and a joyful attitude about self-discipline. It is important that they consistently demonstrate their commitment to Christ, the standards of the church, and to the needs of their family. Their marital covenant will be honored openly.

When friendships *go too far*

by Gerald and Marlene Kaufman

Owners and managers need to create an environment that strengthens marriage not only through reasonable work hours, stress loads and travel requirements but also through restrictions on the workplace friendships that have the potential to lead to extramarital affairs.

In addition to leading by example, they will create a positive work culture through policies that spell out standards for workplace relationships. That will include the usual restrictions on sexual harassment, offensive language, music and other forms of behavior that are already covered through public law. Christian business leaders will take it a step further by being proactive about protecting marriage. Marital safety is a moral issue. Owners and managers need to see themselves as pastors to their employees and their families. They will create an environment that strengthens marriage not only through reasonable work hours, stress loads and travel requirements but also through restrictions on the workplace friendships that have the potential to lead to extramarital affairs. Leaders who see themselves as pastors will accept this responsibility.

What's the problem? When men and women have extramarital affairs, 62 percent of the men and 50 percent of the women find their partner at work. Some affairs are limited to romantic feelings while others become sexual. Both kinds are harmful to the couple, their families and co-workers.

As workplace affairs become more common, even in Christian businesses and organizations, management must take notice. The problem has increased, in part, because men and women frequently work side by side, engage in "team-building" exercises with each other and take business-related trips together. In addition, the broader society has created a more open attitude about male-female friendships. Traditional boundaries have become blurred. For some people, the workplace has become more attractive than home, and work groups have replaced family relationships.

Most workplace affairs start as friendships. Innocently. Naively. Usually unintentionally.

Rippling effects: Workplace affairs affect many people. The people in the affair are the first casualties. Even though they may appear to be happy, many suffer from intense guilt and anxiety. They spend a great deal of energy keeping the relationship secret. These workers are preoccupied, and their job efficiency suffers. It is common for them to develop physical and emotional reactions such as insomnia and depression. When the couple experiences conflict in its relationship or if it ends, the effects are felt in the workplace. People in affairs become troubled workers.

Spouses are also traumatized by these affairs, even before they are fully aware they are happening. Many sense that something is wrong when their spouse withdraws or becomes irritable and defensive. Tenderness and sexual closeness often diminish. A spouse who becomes aware of the affair will usually experience severe physical and emotional reactions. Some require counseling and/or hospital care. If the marriage isn't repaired, it can lead to long, expensive legal battles, the effects of which are brought into the workplace.

Who has affairs? In truth any worker can have an affair. Nobody is immune. Some factors, though, make people vulnerable. These include:

- Spending extra time in cross-gender relationships either on the job, after work or on work-related travel.
- Shift work or excessive overtime.
- Fatigue, anxiety, depression and poor self-esteem.
- Personal or family crises, including death or illness.
- Being in a troubled marriage before the affair began.
- Having unrealistic expectations for marriage.
- Being enticed by a predatory co-worker (male or female).

How they start: Most workplace affairs start as friendships. Innocently. Naively. Usually unintentionally. Always with a degree of physical and emotional attraction. Most affairs typically develop over a period of time. In the beginning, couples deny their feelings. The friendship seems safe because it takes place in full public view. In many ways it is similar to their other friendships. So neither person raises red flags. Not even yellow flags.

But both are seeking something missing from their lives. Or at least they think it is missing. Some are looking to be comforted regarding personal frustrations. Those may be job-related or even about their marriage. Perhaps they are carrying wounds from their earlier life. Many are on a personal flat spot that may have something to do with being middle-aged. New relationships can temporarily bring energy—even youthfulness. Boredom and empty time is the seedbed for many affairs.

Affairs usually start with good conversations. Most people like to discuss things important to them and to be listened to attentively. Romantic friends are often better communicators than spouses are. Marital conversations tend to be predictable and utilitarian, while affair conversations are fresh and appear to be profound. They always feel "good" for the ego. These relationships are intensified by personal emails, phone calls and face-to-face contacts at work. They are expanded through private lunches and socializing after work. At a critical point, many cross the sexual barrier. In this seamless progression, a relationship that began as a friendship becomes a full-fledged affair. Because few people expect this to happen, they don't put safeguards in place or recognize the danger signs early enough.

Management prevention:

- Be straightforward in disapproving workplace affairs. Any inappropriate involvement between married workers that threatens their marriage will be confronted. This message can be conveyed through manuals, orientation programs and supervision.
- Give attention to the physical layout of the workspace. Eliminate areas of the building that

provide too much privacy. In larger workrooms the physical proximity of men and women will be managed.

- Carefully monitor stress overload. Fatigue can impair judgment.
- Examine work-related travel schedules that frequently take employees away from home. When men and women travel together, set up guidelines to protect them.
- Welcome spouses into the workplace and to company functions. Their presence should be viewed as an asset to the company. Segmenting work and home is unnatural and harmful to marriage.
- Caution should be shown for team-building sessions that require workers to participate in intimate exercises with other staff.
- Make personal and marital counseling available to employees.

When to intervene: When extramarital affairs between workers take place, it is important for management to intervene early. The longer the relationship is allowed to continue the harder it is to resolve. If the company policy about affairs is clear, workers shouldn't be surprised when concern is raised. In fact, some workers are relieved when confronted. Some may be unable to end inappropriate relationships by themselves. When workers are defensive, managers should require them and their spouse to see a marriage counselor. If employees reject counseling or refuse to end the affair, their employment should be terminated. When the workplace environment emphasizes integrity in all relationships, the intervention of management will be understood and supported.

Building a safe community: Christian owners and managers want to create a healthy, congenial and truthful work environment. That is done because it is the right thing to do. It is in that setting that people do their best work. Workers who are at peace with each other, with themselves and their families are focused and productive people. Boundaries create comfort. When a community of workers feels safe with each other, trust flourishes and genuine friendships are formed. It is the task of management to create and maintain this kind of spirit for workers. It is important for Christian employers to see the workplace as a sacred gathering place where God's people grow in their personal lives. And where the sacred bonds with their family are strengthened. In that spirit home, work and the sacred are united.

Gerald and Marlene Kaufman are individual and marriage counselors in private practice at Kaufman Counseling Associates in Akron, Pa. They have written Freedom Fences *and* Monday Marriage: Celebrating the Ordinary *(Herald Press, 2005, $9.99). They are members of Akron Mennonite Church. This article first appeared in* The Marketplace.

Christian owners and managers want to create a healthy, congenial and truthful work environment.

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Announcing God's forgiveness

by John M. Drescher

After experiencing God's forgiving grace ourselves, one evidence of that reality and of the indwelling Christ is that we become channels and announcers of God's forgiveness, offering God's forgiveness to others.

We are to speak the word of forgiveness to people we meet, just as Jesus did.

We are to announce and become channels of God's forgiveness. Some time after a marriage retreat, I received a call from a woman who said she was at the retreat. She asked if she could talk with me. She drove a distance and entered our home weeping. She shared that in the early years of their marriage, when they were still in the carousing, drinking stage, she was unfaithful to her husband. After she became a Christian, she was convicted of her sin and carried the guilt for many years. What could she do?

"First," I said, "I want to tell you that God has forgiven you."

"He has?" she said.

I said, "Let me ask you several questions. First, do you confess that what you did was sin?"

"Oh yes. I know it was sin."

"That is conviction. Second, have you ever been sorry for this sin?"

"Every time I think of it, I'm sorry."

"That is contrition. Third, are you still practicing that sin?"

"Oh no, it was one time."

"That is repentance. Have you ever asked God's forgiveness for this sin?"

"Yes," she sobbed, "a thousand times."

I quoted 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "On this basis, I can say that you are forgiven."

Her tears of guilt and sorrow turned into tears of joy and gladness.

In the apostle Paul's first recorded message, we have his basic theology for the rest of his ministry: "Let it be known to you therefore, … that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed unto you; by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).

In John 20:23, Jesus makes an astonishing statement: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." In the mystery of these words is an exciting, challenging responsibility. We are to announce Christ's forgiving grace. How? We are to speak the word of forgiveness even as our Lord did. After experiencing God's forgiving grace ourselves, one evidence of that reality and of the indwelling Christ is that we become channels and announcers of God's forgiveness, offering God's forgiveness to others.

Kenneth Kennon, a pastor, told me this story:

He was a crusty old man, a master of four-letter words. His tongue was a sword with which he could either slowly or quickly dispatch his enemies. He was full of self-hatred and was, by all appearances, a heartless man.

I met Willie in a hospital ward. I had gone there that winter afternoon to visit another patient, the husband of one of our church members recovering from surgery. Willie was in a bed across the aisle in this six-bed room. I had never met him before and didn't know his name, but he was hard to ignore from the first.

As I entered the ward, he was cussing out the nurse. He was not only uncooperative but outright abusive as she tried to get him to take medicine. His respiration was labored, and he used every ounce of strength to tell her where she could go and what she could do with those pills.

I proceeded to the bed of the man I had come to see and began my pastoral visit, but we were constantly interrupted by Willie's outbursts at the nurses trying to help him. My friend said he had been this way since arriving about an hour earlier and that Willie was in the hospital because of a serious heart condition. His heaving chest and the fire in his eyes indicated he wasn't far from a cardiac arrest.

I excused myself from my friend's bedside, crossed the aisle and stood at the foot of his bed as he continued to cuss out a second nurse.

Willie lit into me as a target for his anger. He called me doctor. I said: "I'm not a doctor. I'm a minister."

If there was anyone Willie hated more than doctors, it was ministers. He slashed away at me.

As the nurses beat a tactical retreat from the ward, Willie told me in great detail just what my fate would be if he only had the strength to get up from his bed. I listened and prayed silently for him. It was clear his serious heart problem was more than physical. He was full of bitterness.

After several more minutes of verbal missiles, Willie was exhausted and had no more breath to continue his attack. His eyes showed hatred, determination, fear and panic. I moved to the side of his bed and looked into his eyes.

After several minutes of this unspoken truce, I reached out and put my hand on his. To my surprise he didn't pull away. I became aware of a message I was to deliver to Willie. It seemed risky, but I thought the Holy Spirit was leading me, so I looked him in the eye and said: "Willie, you are forgiven. It's OK. You are forgiven."

The moment was unforgettable and indescribable. After a pause, Willie looked at me and said: "How did you know? How could you possibly know?" His hand was firmer in mine.

I said, "Willie, I don't know, but there is one who knows everything about you. And this one wants you to know that all is forgiven."

Silence came over us again, but this time it was like the silence of some holy place, full of power. We were not alone, and we were both in awe. As I held Willie's hand I could see his tension leave and color return to his pale face, and his breathing became steady.

The nurses returned. He was the picture of cooperation and politeness. Willie didn't say much, but he allowed them to do their work and even thanked them. They were amazed, as I was, at his change of attitude. I remained at his bedside. We didn't talk. We were just there together.

The time came when I needed to leave. I asked Willie if I could offer a prayer. He nodded. It was a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication for God's continuing presence and help in our lives. I took out one of my cards and gave it to Willie, telling him I would be back the next day to visit, but if he wanted me at any time to have the nurse telephone and I would return immediately. We said goodbye, and I left to have dinner with my family.

Both Willie and I encountered the spirit of Jesus Christ in a powerful, life-changing way that winter afternoon. Like Zacchaeus on the street in Jericho, Willie and I were out on a limb and watched Jesus work the miracle of forgiveness in our lives. We came down and received Jesus joyfully. And our ways of doing things were changed.

I hadn't finished my dinner at home when the phone rang. It was the charge nurse saying that Willie had requested that I return to the hospital to see him. I thought his death must be imminent. I rushed back to his bedside.

As I entered the ward I saw that Willie had company. He was sitting up in bed, breathing normally and without oxygen support, and when he saw me coming he broke into a big smile and stuck out his hand. Willie introduced me to his son and daughter-in-law. He said they hadn't spoken to one another in years because of the bitterness between them. But he had called them up and asked them to come to the hospital.

It was apparent they had enjoyed some moments of reconciliation before I came. Willie said he wanted them to meet me and that he wanted to hear something about a God who would forgive someone like him. We celebrated the experience of forgiveness and talked briefly about the God of mercy and loving kindness.

As I left for an evening meeting at the church, I said goodbye. We had another prayer together, and I told Willie I would see him the next day. But that was not to be. I received a call from Willie's son the next morning, saying his father had died an hour or so earlier and that he had been an entirely different person from the one he had known before. He had stayed with his father through the night, and they had the opportunity to express love for one another.

There are others who need to know the reality of God's forgiveness in their lives, who need to put their self-hatred aside, accept forgiveness and have their lives and relationships transformed by the God of love. They need to hear the word of forgiveness and climb down from their particular limb and receive Jesus joyfully and take him home with them.

Perhaps we are those who should speak the word of forgiveness. Or perhaps we are those who should receive such a word and let it enter our hearts. We have no need to continue in pain, resentment, bitterness or despair. We can know the peace of God that passes all understanding, because we are forgiven.

John Drescher is a member of Finland Mennonite Church, Pennsburg, Pa.

We have no need to continue in pain, resentment, bitterness or despair. We can know the peace of God that passes all understanding, because we are forgiven.

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PART 5 OF AN EIGHT-PART SERIES

A caretaker of God's creation

by Bethany Keener

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and it was very good. Then God created man and woman in God's image and gave them the task of caring for the earth.

Jason Schmidt takes that task seriously.

"Farming allows me to understand the continued miracle of life and how God originally designed right relationships within creation," says Jason, who has been serving in La Jara, Colo., through Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) since 2004.

> **We have a calling as Christian peacemakers to bring forth sustainable and ethical economic activities and environmental practices.**
> —Jason Schmidt

Jason grew up on a small family farm in Whitewater, Kan. He is familiar with the gentle mooing of dairy cows, amber waves of wheat and dancing tassels of corn stretching toward the horizon. Like his great-grandfather who bought the farm in 1892, farming is in his blood.

And like his parents, Jeanne and Ralph, farming is a matter of faith.

To Jason, whose home congregation is Grace Hill Mennonite Church in Whitewater, the historical Anabaptist practice of living in alternative ways includes choosing a lifestyle of sustainability in right relationship with all of creation—which includes the environment, farmers, the global community and our bodies.

That's why he was excited when the invitation came to start a Colorado extension of the Santa Fe Family Farmers Co-op last year. He logged hundreds of miles between small family-owned farms, cap pulled down to shield his hazel eyes from the piercing southwest sun as his white truck lumbered through mountain passes and flat, dry mesas. He recruited owners of small, organic farms in the San Luis Valley and west toward Durango to start a fresh produce club and establish wholesale accounts for natural food stores in the region. The goal was to provide small-scale farmers with a means to market their produce at a premium price through a joint effort.

His MVS assignment has given him a sense of fulfillment as he seeks to live in right relationship with all of creation.

Paul Cross, organic farmer and New Mexico co-op member, says the farmers who participate do so not because of the money (which isn't much) but because of a standard of caring for the earth based in spiritual values.

This conviction is echoed in article 21 of the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective: "As stewards of God's earth, we are called to care for the earth and to bring rest and renewal to the land and everything that lives on it."

Because of financial hardships and the challenge of such a cooperative endeavor, the Colorado co-op needs major restructuring. But Jason isn't giving up. "We have a calling as Christian peacemakers to bring forth sustainable and ethical economic activities and environmental practices," he says.

Without checks that encourage a system of fair wages and environmental caution, the economic and environmental health of farm communities is compromised. These injustices may "lead to disempowerment, impoverishment and finally to actual acts of violence," Jason says.

"In the [Western Hemisphere] we rely on an unbalanced distribution of resources," says Luke

Justice and creation care: Jason Schmidt on the San Luis Ranch of George Whitten and Jule Sullivan near Moffat, Colo.

Mark Wasser

Gascho, volunteer facilitator of the Mennonite Creation Care Network and executive director of Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center in Wolf Lake, Ind. That sometimes means wages that aren't sustainable and abuse of migrant laborers, Jason says.

Grocery budgets, he says, can either support these practices or move toward a different paradigm. Gascho says this means having to work harder at being intentional about what we buy while living within financial limits.

Purchasing locally grown food solves several of these problems by ensuring fair wages to farmers who are taking care to replenish the earth. It also cuts down on the amount of limited natural resources needed to transport food.

Jason thinks the organic and other niche markets may be where small family farms will have to head in order to stay viable against large corporate farms. Despite its difficulties, the market for natural and organic foods is growing as Christians and non-Christians alike look for products that are economically and environmentally sustainable. Many consumers are also in the market for health reasons.

Louis Steele is one such consumer, and the general manager of Nature's Oasis, a natural food store in Durango, Colo., that purchases food from the farmer's co-op. Several of his family members who grew up in farming communities are now battling cancer. He's concerned about how food grown with the help of pesticides may affect his four children.

Not surprisingly, his convictions also come out of a biblical understanding of caring for all of creation.

As coordinator of the San Luis Valley Food and Ag Policy Council, Jason is now developing markets for local farmers and working with school children to increase their knowledge about nutrition and agriculture. By summer's end, he hopes to establish a connection between schools and farms that will help children from an economically depressed region learn how to care for their bodies and the earth in a way that treasures both as part of God's creation.

Jason knows the questions of how best to live in right relationship with all of creation have no easy answers. Ultimately, each individual must decide what it means to be a caretaker of the Creator's garden.

Bethany Keener is assistant news editor for Mennonite Mission Network

Wheat field was their mission field

Mary Miller remembers her parents as generous people. Their family was large and didn't have much, yet there was always enough to give away.

"I suspect part of that rubbed off on me," Mary says. She's grateful her husband, Bob, also finds joy in giving from the fruits of their labors on the farm they worked for 47 years. On their 187 acres they fed beef cattle and grew corn, wheat and soybeans.

Watching his green rows of corn and feeling the heavy heads of wheat, Bob feels a connection between his faith and his work.

"We think of farmers being independent, but we're not. We rely on God," he says. Just as God quietly sent the rain and sun, the Millers have quietly given back. By giving to missions, they support many people serving God.

Because they couldn't leave their farm, they were never able to go serve. One year after their children were grown, they decided to give a year's worth of profit away. They took their grain to the mill and sent the check to missions.

They call it their year of voluntary service.

Bob and Mary Miller live in Orrville, Ohio, and are members of Smithville Mennonite Church.—*Bethany Keener*

Signs of hope out of the chaos

Roy Williams is moderator of Mennonite Church USA and pastor of College Hill Mennonite Church, Tampa, Fla.

Nothing says chaos like a hurricane or natural disaster. Being from Jamaica and now living in Florida, I can tell you hurricanes have a knack for making people nervous. They create chaos and leave us with a sense of uncertainty. They also test our faith and force us to look to God for guidance and security.

When I look back on the early stages of the transformation of Mennonite Church USA, I think of the chaos we encountered. Not only because there was a hurricane bearing down on Baltimore that prevented several Executive Board members from attending our first meeting but also because we had to take two pieces that were different—the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church—and start over with a blank sheet of paper to create something new.

It's been four years since our transformation began, and chaos is still brewing around us. Area conferences are trying to figure out their role within the denomination, and we're working to create a truly equitable denomination for all people—regardless of their ethnic background, life story, income level or geographic location—that equips its leaders and members to do Christ's work in their communities and the world.

More of us are recognizing we are part of one big Anabaptist family with one system of values. Our people in the pew are getting more involved in what God is doing in their communities and overseas.

The good news is that in spite of that chaos, God has been able to work, and we're beginning to see evidence of the Holy Spirit's work. Structural soundness is beginning to develop for the Executive Board, and the multiple parts of Mennonite Church USA are starting to see us as a strong center for the denomination. Our churchwide agencies—Mennonite Education Agency, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Publishing Network and MMA—are increasingly collaborating with each other and with Executive Board for the good of the whole.

Another encouragement is that more of us are recognizing we are part of one big Anabaptist family with one system of values. Our people in the pew are getting more involved in what God is doing in their communities and overseas. It's this kind of work I feel passionate about helping all of Mennonite Church USA pursue—its work for God's kingdom, not just our denomination.

Signs of hope for our future surround us, but organizational work still must be done so we have a system in place to equip us to not only bring people to know Christ but also to welcome them as our own and disciple them so Mennonite Church USA can continue long after we're gone.

It won't happen overnight, and we can expect a little more chaos here and there as we allow God's Spirit to give us direction and purpose. After all, we've probably only recently entered the calm in the eye of the hurricane, and we'll need to have faith and perseverance so we can weather the storm and come out ready to do Christ's work. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Bearing the cross**—Linda Gehman Peachey
- **The Transfiguration**—Bert Newton
- **Escaping the islands of isolation**—Roy E. Bronkema
- **Mennonite World Conference coverage**

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CPT worker Tom Fox found killed in Iraq

In death as in life, he accompanies an Iraqi detainee in coffins on a U.S. plane.

U.S. forces in Iraq recovered the body of kidnapped Christian Peacemaker Teams activist Tom Fox, 54, CPT confirmed March 10.

Fox, a Quaker from Clearbrook, Va., was found by Iraqi police with his hands bound and with gunshot wounds to the head and chest the evening of March 9, according to the Associated Press. When police saw the body was that of a Westerner, U.S. military authorities were called to the scene, reports said.

Fox was kidnapped in Baghdad Nov. 26, 2005, along with fellow CPTers Norman Kember, 74, a Briton, and Canadians James Loney, 41, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32. The four were seized at gunpoint by a group calling itself the Swords of Righteousness Brigade and have been shown in videos released by the group, which has demanded the release of all detainees in U.S. and Iraqi prisons.

The most recent video, a silent 25-second clip that aired on Aljazeera March 7, showed all the hostages except Fox.

Tom Fox

Canadian authorities informed CPT Toronto at 1:30 p.m. EST March 10, that a body had been found in Baghdad which was likely that of Tom Fox. An hour later, when the CPT Iraq team asked officials at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad if they could come identify the body, they were told it had already left on a military transport for Dover. At 8 p.m. EST, the U.S. State Department confirmed the identity as Tom Fox based on fingerprints.

On March 11, CPT Iraq learned that Fox's body was still at the Anaconda base at Balat. The U.S. Embassy arranged for Beth Pyles, a member of the CPT Iraq team, to travel to Anaconda, and she kept vigil for the next 36 hours until departure.

Pyles was present on the tarmac at Anaconda as Fox's coffin was loaded onto the plane for Dover. Iraqi detainees who die in U.S. custody are also transported to Dover for autopsies and forensics. On this plane, beside Fox's coffin, was the coffin of an Iraqi detainee.

At Fox's departure, Pyles read from the Gospel of John: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (1:5). In honor of his Iraqi companion, she spoke the words called out repeatedly from the mosques of Baghdad during the bombing campaign in March 2003: "Allah akhbar" (God is greater). She concluded with words from the Jewish Scriptures: "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).—*CPT and Associated Press*

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Global church confronts wealth gap

MWC's gathering in Paraguay in 2009 will receive report on the debate.

It is time to confront the disparity of wealth between members of the global Mennonite and Anabaptist family, said delegates to a consultation sponsored by Mennonite World Conference and Mennonite Central Committee March 7-8 in Pasadena, Calif. MWC and MCC leaders also accepted a mandate from the several hundred participants to lead an international debate over the next three years and bring a report of the results to the 2009 MWC gathering in Paraguay.

Although Africa represents 43.26 percent of MWC membership, its wealth represents only 0.85 percent of the total of MWC membership's estimated wealth.—Pakisa Tshimika and Ron Mathies

The special "service consultation," held at the beginning of MWC's mini-assembly March 9-16, was described as a time to talk about "diakonia," the biblical Greek word that means "in service to the world." But in this case, the service envisioned was to each other within the global Anabaptist and Mennonite network of churches. It also focused heavily on the inequitable distribution of wealth across MWC constituencies.

"Although Africa represents 43.26 percent of MWC membership," said conference moderators Pakisa Tshimika and Ron Mathies, "its wealth represents only 0.85 percent of the total of MWC membership's estimated wealth."

Tshimaka, MWC's associate executive secretary, and Mathies, former executive director for MCC, said that in contrast to the poverty of African members, North American members own 88 percent of the aggregate wealth while comprising less than 26 percent of total MWC membership. The MWC constituency in Asia, which is almost as large as North American membership, has only 2 percent of the wealth.

"There is widespread economic disparity that dramatically impacts the life of the global church," said Janet Plenert for the listening committee at the end of the consultation, "and … the faithful living out of the gospel of Jesus Christ requires radical economic upheaval (jubilee)."

In response, participants agreed to the following steps:

- sharing the ideas and themes of the service consultation with home churches;
- facilitating greater communication and information sharing among member churches;
- developing a study guide from an Anabaptist perspective on the biblical/theological foundations of diakonia/service, including an analysis of the socioeconomic systems and structures of the contemporary world;
- creating a permanent forum on diakonia/service;
- establishing regional service consultations.

At the end of the consultation, Larry Miller, MWC executive secretary, and Robb Davis, MCC executive director, were asked if their agencies would accept responsibility for the next steps (see photo). Davis said MCC could help with the socioeconomic analysis. Miller said MWC could provide the biblical context.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Everett J. Thomas

Larry Miller (left), Mennonite World Conference executive secretary, and Robb Davis, Mennonite Central Committee executive director, illustrate a Congolese saying—that partners must exchange shoes—which they did for several hours during the March 7-8 service consultation.

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Simply in Season

CLC grapples with finances, identity

Task force forms, hears feedback on structure and vision of denomination

In his state of the church report to the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) meeting March 6-8 at the Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, said when the denomination formed four years ago, he predicted that eventually money would replace membership as an issue. "I was wrong," he said. "They are both issues."

In its first four years, he pointed out, Executive Leadership lost one-fourth of its buying power. Last month, the Executive Board passed a comprehensive financial resolution that will re-examine the entire churchwide financial system.

Finances also became a major topic of conversation in the table groups that CLC employs at each of its semiannual meetings. A frequent comment was that giving is often tied to identity and vision. Vern Rempel of Mountain States Conference commented that funding often "flows along emotional pipelines."

To address such issues, CLC is looking to a task force called for at last fall's meeting (see Oct. 18, 2005) to look at the roles of area conferences. With the task force appointed (see box, page 21), table groups discussed core values, roles, decision-making and finances. The group will meet in April and likely once more before bringing proposals to this fall's CLC meeting.

Core values: Sue Biesecker-Mast, the task force chair, led the CLC conversations. She concluded from these that CLC members affirmed the foundational documents of Mennonite Church USA, including the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, the membership guidelines, the organizational strategy and the bylaws.

Comments indicated a desire to be a Christ-centered, congregational and transformational church that emphasizes discipleship, sees the church as an alternative to our culture and as a sign of the reign of God, believes in giving and receiving counsel, shares resources and depends on the Spirit.

Task force members include Sue Biesecker-Mast, chair (Central District); Joanne Dietzel, staff (Lancaster); Duncan Smith (Pacific Northwest) and Darrell Baer (Franklin), small conferences; Wayne Hochstetler (Illinois) and Susan Janzen (Central Plains), medium sized conferences; Tom Kaufman (Ohio) and Mary Ellen Meyer (Indiana-Michigan), large conferences; Zenobia Sowell-Bianchi (African American Mennonite Association) and Samuel Lopez (Hispanic Mennonite Church); Carlos Romero (Mennonite Education Agency) and Stanley Green (Mission Network); Jim Schrag (Executive Leadership) and Sharon Waltner (Executive Board).

Gordon Houser

Relationship building: Steve Brown of Virginia Conference and Noel Santiago, Constituency Leaders Council vice chair, talk during a break.

Roles: In discussing the roles of conferences, agencies and congregations, most CLC members said the organizational structure seemed sound. However, several tables said that relationships between roles is the problem. One said that CLC is an important place for relationship building.

These roles play out in decision-making. One table said that congregations have the most clout and are at the center of church life. Meanwhile, conferences are involved in deciding pastoral leadership, while agencies tend to set priorities, and Executive Leadership oversees the whole. One table said conferences want a larger role in setting priorities. Another asked, Who sorts all this out?

Finances: While most CLC members said the firstfruits concept is a good one theologically, the funding system based on it is not working well. Earlier, Jim Schrag said, "A funding system [in Mennonite Church USA] does not exist; we have a system of funding systems."

The Executive Board faces a shrinking budget, and much giving goes elsewhere. One table asked if the church is being assertive enough. Further, do we suspect rather than celebrate those with the gift of making money? Another table said that conferences are also hurting and cannot compete with agencies' marketing ability.

The firstfruits model, said a table, assumes trust, which is not always there. And financial shortfalls lead to conflict. John Rohrer of Ohio Conference quoted his grandfather: "When the oats is short, the horses fight each other."

CLC also heard about last month's Education Opportunities Summit in Los Angeles involving Mennonite Church USA schools, area conferences, churchwide agencies and constituency groups to address the educational needs of racial-ethnic Mennonites and those in urban settings.

Bob Zehr of Gulf States Conference expressed gratitude for the generosity of the broader church in responding to Gulf States congregations in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

The next CLC meeting will be Oct. 13-15 in Donaldson, Ind.—*Gordon Houser*

Mennonites help write WCC statement

A Mennonite reflects on the good and bad of the World Council of Churches.

Amid brightly colored posters, rhythmic songs and dances, multicostumed participants swirled through the humid summer of Porto Allegre, Brazil, Feb. 14-23 at the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Most Mennonites agree with much that WCC documents say on social issues, but the biblical and theological support is often thin, and they appeal mainly to humanistic values.

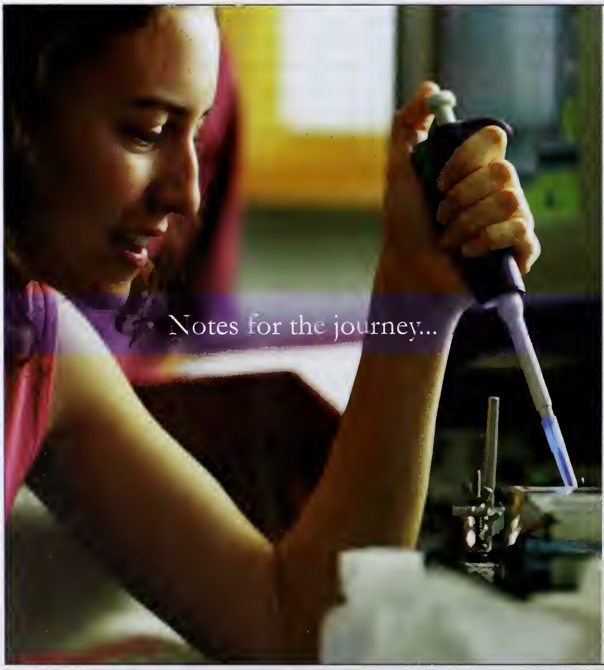
The WCC is composed of 348 Protestant and Orthodox churches, making it the largest interchurch, or ecumenical, organization on the globe. American Mennonites, who have long been suspicious of large, bureaucratic organizations and the WCC's liberal theological trends, have never joined. Dutch Mennonites, however, were among the Council's founding members in 1948. Two other Mennonite bodies, German and Congolese, have joined since—but that is all.

Mennonite interest grew soon after the WCC's Eighth Assembly at Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998. There a tiny group from the Historic Peace Churches (Quaker, Brethren and Mennonite) prompted the Council to initiate an entire Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010). Hansuli Gerber, a Swiss Mennonite, now directs the DOV. At Porto Allegre it was clear the WCC expects Mennonites to help lead this program, even though most of our churches are not members. Since 1998 the Council has moved toward pacifism, though some churches still prefer a "just war" position.

This tension was visible in a document on "The Responsibility to Protect" vulnerable people in serious danger, as in Darfur. When I and a dozen other Historic Peace Churches (HPC) representatives arrived, this document, in draft form, stated that many WCC churches favored military intervention at times, though some would never sanction it. Despite having less than 24 hours to propose revisions, several of us crafted them in two areas.

First, the draft described the second view above negatively, as simply rejecting violent means. I rewrote this positively: some churches "can only support intervention by creative, nonviolent means."

Second, the draft was nearly devoid of biblical references. It did mention Jesus' call to love our enemies. I added: "This is based on the loving character of God, revealed supremely in the death of Jesus Christ for his enemies, absorbing their hostility and exercising mercy rather than retributive justice (Romans 5:10; Luke 6:36)."


Notes for the journey...

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Both revisions, along with other HPC recommendations, survived four more drafts, into the document approved by the Assembly. Other revisions fared less well. The first draft based "the primacy of nonviolence" on the presence of God's image in everyone. I added that everyone also "shares the human nature assumed by Jesus Christ in his incarnation, which was raised into eternal life by his Father through the Holy Spirit." But while the first phrase made it through, the second was axed.

While the Council formally affirms a trinitarian basis, the first draft lacked any trinitarian reference, and when one was suggested, it was explicitly rejected.

Most Mennonites agree with much that WCC documents say on social issues: poverty, AIDS, racism, globalization and more. But the biblical and theological support is often thin, and they appeal mainly to humanistic values. This is one reason why most Pentecostal and Evangelical churches are not members, and why the Orthodox, who comprise more than one-third of the WCC, often critique it.

At the Eighth Assembly, the Orthodox seemed ready to withdraw. But due to a "Special Commission on Orthodox Participation" during the interim, they appeared in force at this Ninth Assembly, though no one yet knows for how long.

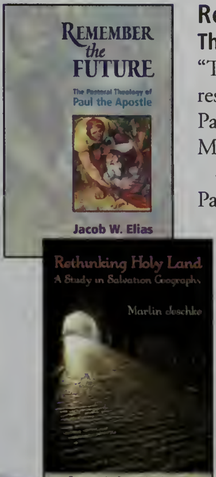
The WCC also recognizes that it does not represent the largest, fastest-growing Christian movements and is seeking to "widen the table" to Pentecostals and Evangelicals (and Mennonites). Yet these two groups were less visible at this assembly than at the eighth or the seventh (1991).

Another major issue was other religions. The WCC recognizes the importance of working with them when they support common goals, such as overcoming violence. But we heard different overall viewpoints. According to one, all religions apparently are channels of salvation, and mission deals mostly with social goals.

Another perspective, expressed by Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, emphasized "utter commitment to the God who is revealed in Jesus" and viewing other religions from the "place that Jesus defines for us," shaped by the unique biblical story and the church. We need not avoid people of other faiths but can seek to understand them and perhaps glimpse in their eyes "a reflection of what we see; they do not have the words we have, but something is deeply recognizable."

The WCC dealt admirably with many crucial global issues. It is one of the few worldwide movements offering effective critique and alternatives to the dangers of economic and military globalization. But I wonder how consistently it operates in the name and strength of Jesus.—*Tom Finger*

Timely Books from Herald Press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CALENDAR

Bluesky (Alberta) Mennonite Church, ***50th anniversary celebration***, Aug. 26-27.

CrossRoads will host an ***Open House for Turner's Miller*** along Brenneman Church Road (two miles north of Harrisonburg (Va.) and west of Route 42) April 15, 1-5 p.m. The public is invited to hear plans to restore and preserve this 200-year-old gem, the only remaining pre-Civil War mill in Rockingham County which is still fully equipped with grist mill equipment. Visitors to the open house will be able to tour the mill, see the old grist stones and water wheel, take pictures, hear how the mill was saved during the Civil War, learn about restoration plans and discover how to support the restoration process.

The ***annual Easter sunrise service*** on the **CrossRoads** hilltop will be sponsored by Harrisonburg First Church of the Brethren and Weavers Mennonite Church April 16 at 6:30 a.m. Jeff Kaufman, pastor of Weavers Mennonite Church, will share a meditation from this panoramic view of the Shenandoah Valley and the mountain ranges to the east. Rain site will be Weavers Mennonite Church along Route 33 west of Harrisonburg, Va.

CrossRoads (Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center), ***"Brethren and Mennonites in the Midst of Other Religions in the Valley"***, speaker Stephen L. Longenecker, March 25, 7:30 p.m. The lecture will be held at Community Mennonite Church, 70 S. High St., Harrisionburg, Va.

Children's Defense Fund, ***12th Annual Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry Congregations Stand for Healthy Children: Bringing Hope and Healing***, July 17-21, Children's Defense Fund Haley Farms, Clinton, Tenn. Five days of spiritual renewal, networking, movement building workshops and continuing education about how their faith relates to justice and children. For more registration information, visit CDF's Web site www.childrensdefense.org/Proctor_Registration_06.pdf.

MMA Stewardship University will arrive at Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, Iowa, March 25. Open to the public, this traveling educational event from MMA helps people nurture and cultivate their God-given gifts. Full day workshops, including lunch, are $39. Early registration and group discounts are available. One-workshop option available for $19. Both prices include workshop instructional materials. For more information, contact MMA at 800-348-7468, ext. 269, or education@mma-online.org. Information and online registration are also available at www.StewardshipUniversity.org.

PA Relief Sale: ***Celebrating Community, Creating Hope***, March 31-April 1, 2006. Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, PA. Featuring the renowned quilt sale, great food, artisan displays, children's activities, a country auction and much more. All sale day proceeds benefiting the worldwide relief efforts of Mennonite Central Committee. www.pareliefsale.org

WORKERS

Moyer, Angela, was licensed Feb. 1 as youth pastor at Rockhill Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Garber, Ava Bree, Feb. 6, to Derrick and Jennifer Dilcher Garber, East Petersburg, Pa.

Gingerich, Nicholas Darwin, Feb. 20, to Darwin and Annie Maach Gingerich, Moundridge, Kan.

Goshow, Kaci Marie, Feb. 10, to Clarke and Mary Posen Goshow, Sellersville, Pa.

Haddad, Clement Evangel Habakkuk, Feb. 22, to Peter and Deborah Kilheffer Haddad, Scottdale, Pa.

Halteman, Richard Jacob, Jan. 5, to Richard and Jill Halteman, Souderton, Pa.

Holliday, Ella Elizabeth, Feb. 22, to Jeff Holliday and Lori Oswald, Denver, Colo.

Horst, Amelia Katherine, Feb. 20, to Steve and Brenda Lantzy Horst, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Kilheffer, Hannah Elizabeth, Jan. 26, to Jonathan and Tracy Delp Kilheffer, East Petersburg, Pa.

Kindbom, Cole Thomas, Jan. 11, to Kyle and Jennifer Schade Kindbom, Wooster, Ohio.

Lehman, Adrien Luke, Feb. 1, to Brent and Claudia Torres Lehman, Massillon, Ohio.

McDonough, Griffin Michael, Feb. 28, to Brendan and Heather Krehbiel McDonough, Wichita, Kan.

Nofziger, Preston Eli, Feb. 18, to Doug and Michelle Stutzman Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio.

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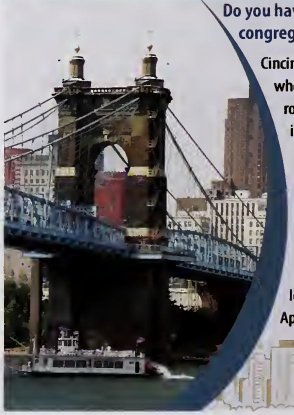


Renick, Ethan Michael, June 8, to Eric and Kamala Geiser Renick, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Shank, Ella Elizabeth Hope, March 2, to Ryan and Jackie Shank, Fayetteville, Pa.

Thomas, Sheldon, received for adoption Oct. 7, 2005, by Douglas Brunk, Philadelphia, Pa.

Wyse, Kendall Ann, Feb. 18, to Neil and Jamie King Wyse, Wauseon, Ohio.

Yocum-Pringle, Damadi Marie, Nov. 12, 2005, to Michael Pringle and ChiritaYocum, Akron, Pa.

MARRIAGES

Buller/Golden: Andrea Buller, Goshen, Ind., and Jason Golden, Goshen, Nov. 26, 2005, at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Fransen/Weidner: Kay Ann Schrag Fransen, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Mark Weidner, Perkasie, Pa., Jan. 14 at Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship.

Hunsberger/Speigle: Reuben Hunsberger, Davidsville, Pa., and Jeri Speigle, Hollsopple, Pa., Feb. 17 at Kaufman Mennonite Church, Davidsville.

Prieb/Unruh: Stephanie Prieb, Buhler, Kan., and David Unruh, Inman, Kan., Feb. 18 at Buhler Mennonite Brethren Church.

DEATHS

Baker, Robert J., 85, Elkhart, Ind., died Feb. 19. Spouse: Anna Mae Moyer Baker. Parents: Frank and Florence Baker. Children: Doug, Solly Walker, Timothy, Nancy, Rebecca Hoyt; 16 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Bishop, Mary Hunsberger, 105, Souderton, Pa., died Feb. 23. Spouse: William Bishop (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Kate Hunsberger. Child: Kenneth; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 27 at Souderton Mennonite Community.

Bowman, Lydia Ann Horst, 78, died Feb. 18 from complications due to a stroke. Spouse: Leroy H. Bowman. Parents: Joseph and Bertha Sensenig Horst. Children: James L., Richard L., Elvin R. "Bo", Janet L., Dale E., Leon M.; 20 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 22 at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Eby, Everett J., 92, Elkhart, Ind., died Feb. 21 of cancer. Spouse: (1st) Anna Hunsberger (deceased), (2nd) Katy Persing. Parents: Mervin and Goldie Eby. Children: Roger, Rolland, Rex, Carolyn Blosser, Shelba Lenaburg, Linda Rider; 16 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 25 at Nappanee (Ind.) Missionary Church.

Fisher, Vernon, 87, Kalona, Iowa, died Feb. 10. Spouse: Hilda Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Mary Yoder Fisher. Child: Cheryl Monemi; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Goerzen, Sue Nikkel, 80, Harrow, Ont., died Jan. 14. Spouse: Gerhard Goerzen. Parents: Peter and Katie Nikkel. Children: John, Mary Goerzen Sheard; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Harrow Mennonite Church.

Graber, Bertha Gering, 101, Ritzville, Wa., died Feb. 11. Spouse: Joe J. Graber (deceased). Parents: Adolf P. and Elizabeth Schrag Gering. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville.

Hahn, Mabel, 91, Elkhart, Ind., died Feb. 21 due to complications from a stroke. Parents: Charles and Emma Jane Hahn. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Hunsberger, Charlotte Meier, 82, Sellersville, Pa., died Jan. 14. Spouse: Harold Hunsberger. Parents: Herman and Clara Rice Meier. Children: Mark, Sylvia H. Shelly, Lynette H. Marksberry, James; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Jantzen, Naomi Shellenberg, 75, Cincinnati, Ohio, died Oct. 27, 2005. Parents: Isaac and Tena Schellenberg. Child: Franz; two grandchildren. Memorial service: Dec. 10, 2005, at Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship.

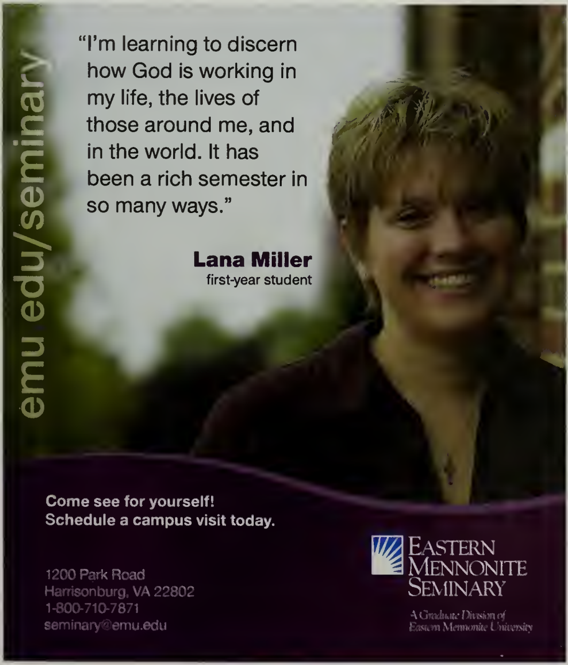
Kaufman, Esther Bontrager, 85, Kalispell, Mont., died Feb. 12. Spouse: Paul S. Kaufman. Parents: Glen Joseph and Cora May Chupp Bontrager. Children: E. Elaine, Daniel D., Kenneth G., Stephen G., Brenda M. Younger, Alice L. Arneson; 14 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Kalispell.

Krenicky, Harry Jr., 77, Millersburg, Ind., died Feb. 18 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Arlis Whirledge Krenicky. Parents: Harry and Mary Dudiak Krenicky. Stepchild: Ronald Spring; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Landis, I. Marvin, 90, Lititz, Pa., died Jan. 15 of cardiac failure. Spouse: (1st) Belva Dombach (deceased), (2nd) Anna Mae Groff. Parents: Phares B. and Martha B. Landis. Memorial service: Jan. 19 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Lauber, Fern E., 87, Archbold, Ohio, died Feb. 19. Spouse: Kenneth Lauber (deceased). Parents: William J. and Elizabeth Godshall Rupp. Children: John, Jerry, Keith, Brenda Dickinson, Karen Smith; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Feb. 22 at Evangelical Mennonite Church, Archbold.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.



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- **fax 574-535-6050**
- **1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794**

Martin, Nelson Lester, 82, Chambersburg, Pa., died Feb. 22. Spouse: Janet Kipe Martin. Parents: David and Rhoda Diller Martin. Children: Arvid, Yvonne, Twila, Freda Witmer; step-children: Joyce Cooper, Warren Hostetter; 10 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 26 at Cedar Grove Mennonite Church, Greencastle, Pa.

Mierau, Jacob, 81, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 19. Spouse: Lucille Culp Mierau. Parents: John and Lena Mierau. Children: Brenda Yoder, Bonnie Bailey, Patricia Martin, Judy Miller, Karyn, Bryan; 23 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 25 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Barbara, 87, Lagrange, Ind., died March 1. Spouse: Freman S. Miller (deceased). Parents: John and Elizabeth Miller. Children: Norma Freeman Weaver, Donald R., DeWayne E.; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 5 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Moser, Raymond K., 91, Oley, Pa., died Feb. 12 of cancer. Spouse: Hannah Weller Moser (deceased). Parents: Raymond A. and Sally A. Moser. Children: Betty Angstadt, Donna Moyer, Daniel; six grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Ark Bible Chapel, Boyertown, Pa.

Neufeld, Bruce L., 54, Inman, Kan., died Feb. 17. Parents: Abe E. and Lenora Bartel Neufeld. Burial: Feb. 21 in Inman.

Neuhouser, Mary Gardner, 83, Leo, Ind., died Feb. 16. Spouse: Merle Neuhouser (deceased). Parents: Jesse and Dora Miller Gardner. Children: Lynne D. Kurtz, Donald M., David A., Sue A. Pownall, Kathy J. Brown; seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo-Cedarville, Ind.

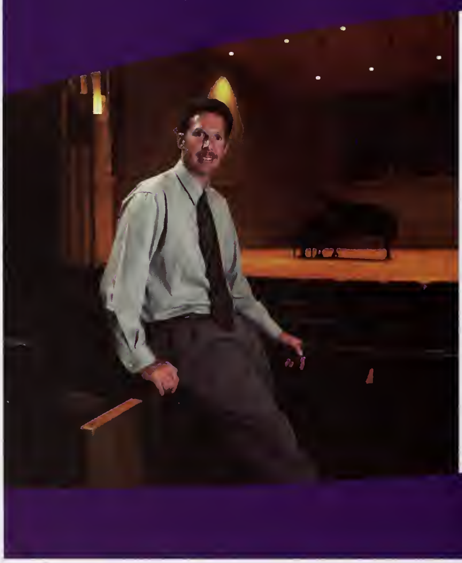
Quiring, Frank Stanley, 78, North Newton, Kan., died Feb. 23 in a car-pedestrian accident. Spouse: Evelyn Wiebe Quiring. Parents: Henry and Helen Lehrman Quiring. Children: Sam, Sherwood, Natalie, Powell; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: March 11 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Rempel, Arthur, 81, Winnipeg, Man., died Feb. 16 from inflammation of the lungs. Spouse: Helen Wiens Rempel. Parents: Peter and Maria Wiebe Rempel. Children: Evelyn Rempel Petkau, Melita Rempel-Burkholder, Roberta M. Renz, Janet L. Anderson, Therresa H. Rempel; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Sawatzky, Mabel Worms, 87, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Feb. 13. Spouse: John J. Sawatzky. Parents: Jacob J. and Marie Goertzen Worms. Children: Fay Krause, Elsie Stomberg, Liz Schmidt, Lorena Mierau, David, Gerhardt, Mary Ann Fredrickson; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Vercler, May Yoder, 98, Eureka, Ill., died Feb. 23. Spouse: Ralph E. Vercler (deceased). Parents: Cary and Maud Strubhar Yoder. Foster child: Marcia Russell; two grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 2 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington, Ill.

Wyse, Delila B., 92, Archbold, Ohio, died March 2. Spouse: Rolland Wyse (deceased). Parents: Adam J. and Edith Short. Children: Linda Kinnan, Jeanette Miller, Richard; seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 6 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold.



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Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***full-time representative to the U.S. and Canada*** to provide leadership for EMM's long-term work in these countries. Qualifications: cross-cultural and church planting experience, heart for prayer, leadership and organizational skills, ability to share vision and recruit. Position begins June 1. To apply, contact Jeanette Hess (jeanetteh@emm.org or 717-898-2251) by April 12.

Rockhill Mennonite Community has a full-time opportunity for a ***director*** in our beautiful Independent Living Center. This position oversees daily operations of our retirement center of over 250 residents. Candidate must have a graduate degree, management experience and experience working with older adults. Please fax resumé to 215-257-7390, or email cbazzel@rockhillmennonite.org. EOE

MCC urgent opening: ***Assistant Director of Human Resources,*** Akron, Pa. Needed May 1, 2006. Leads selection and processing of applications for Latin America candidates and SALT positions. Strong communication skills required. Cross-cultural experience preferred. Contact Lowell Detweiler at lcd@mcc.org or call 717-859-1151.

English conversation teachers needed! **Connexus**; a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry; needs University grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

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MCC urgent opening: ***Resource Generation Network Coordinator***, Akron, Pa. Needed June 1, 2006. Coordinates resource generation network for MCC offices across Canada and the United States. Coordinates the establishment of standards in fund-raising, setting goals and building network capacities. Experience in nonprofit fund-raising preferred with excellent skills in communication and management. Contact Lowell Detweiler at lcd@mcc.org or call 717-859-1151 for job description and further information.

Goshen College has an opening for a ***part-time Women's Volleyball head coach position*** beginning July 2006, for the 2006-07 academic year and beyond. Planning and recruitment work could start earlier. For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Eastern Mennonite University announces ***full-time, continuing faculty position in digital media and photography*** beginning Fall 2006. M.F.A. required. M.A. in photography with related Ph.D. considered. EMU is building on its strong visual arts and communications programs by adding two new majors in digital media and photography. EMU is searching for a candidate who has broad experience in both areas and will be prepared to join current faculty teaching classes included in the following curriculum: digital imaging, Web design, flash, graphic design, 2-D animation/after effects, color digital photography, studio photography, documentary digital photography, black and white photography, narrative video and documentary video (production and editing), visual communication theory, mass communication and culture, film and culture student advising, university service and ongoing studio work and scholarship expected. Salary and rank determined by education and experience. EMU uses an extended contract system. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, portfolio, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email to ugdean@emu.edu; www.emu.edu. Review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., is accepting resumes for the position of ***executive director***.

Interested parties can send resumés, or make recommendations to Kent Yoder, kent_yoder@jayco.com, through March 28, 2006. If you would like a job description or would like to speak to someone about the position, please contact members of the search committee, including Stephanie Company, 309-829-5955, sbcompany@baumchevybuick.com; John Fox, 260-525-0293, foxj@nadams.k12.in.us and Kent Yoder, 574-825-7274, kent_yoder@jayco.com.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary invites pastors to apply for ***funded sabbaticals*** for up to nine weeks on the AMBS campus. Funding covers housing, provides a stipend and allows pastors to participate in campus events, meet with professors and receive spiritual direction. Participants pursue a writing project of choice during the time at AMBS. Applications for spring 2007 are due on April 28. Slots for fall 2006 are still available and applications are still being accepted. Information and application forms are available online at www.ambs.edu; choose Church Leadership Center, then Engaging Pastors (the final Web address will be www.ambs.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep_sabbatical.php). Pastors may also phone 574-296-6269 for information. Send applications to AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517, or hdueck@ambs.edu.

Greeley (Colo.) Mennonite Church is seeking a ***full-time pastor,*** beginning late summer, to minister to a committed group of 50-plus Anabaptists in a growing university town. If pastoring a growth minded church on the Front Range of sunny Colorado in a newly restructured conference appeals to you, contact Linda Miller at 4millers2@comcast.net or call 970-353-3795.

Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church is seeking candidates for a current open position of full-time ***youth minister***. The youth minister gives pastoral leadership to a group of 50+ high-school-age students. Candidates should have a growing passion for their faith in Jesus, love of youth and the ability to lead a team of eight volunteer sponsors. The candidate would be part of a team of four other pastors. A bachelor's degree in youth ministries is preferred. Interested people should send a resumé to Tom Kaufman, Franconia Mennonite Church, 613 Harleysville Pike, Telford, PA 18969.

Mennonite Disaster Service Open Positions:

MDS is expanding its bi-national staff as a result of the increased need following the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005. MDS will interview and hire qualified candidates to head the following areas, each reporting directly to the Executive Director:

Communications—Primary responsibility: to develop and administer a comprehensive communications plan to share the MDS message with the constituency and stakeholder communities as well as the general public, interpreting MDS philosophy/vision and promoting strong support.

Field Operations—Primary responsibility: to manage all field operations and to assure effective and efficient team effort in all field relationships and activities in serving MDS "customers/clients" within the philosophy and resource parameters of MDS.

Finance & Administration—Primary responsibility: to oversee the financial management, reporting and controller functions, assuring integrity in all financial aspects of MDS.

Human Resources—Primary responsibility: to assure prompt provision of qualified staff for all leadership positions and long-term volunteer positions and program needs. To enhance effective teamwork throughout the organization.

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Dock Woods Community offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Interested candidates should send resumé along with salary requirements to the HR Dept. 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446 or fax to 215-565-2413. EOE www.dockwoods.com

Mennonite Mission Network has an immediate opening for a full-time ***development associate*** who will represent Mission Network, strengthen relationships with constituents and cultivate and solicit charitable support for Mission Network purposes. Candidates should bring a passion to connect with God's reconciling mission to the world, the ability and desire to meet new people and experience talking with people about financial issues. Ability and willingness to travel is a must. Ideally, this person will be located on the east coast, but Elkhart, Ind., and Newton, Kan., are possibilities. The full position description is located on the Web at www.Mennonitemission.net. Interested people should send a letter of interest and resumé to Staff Recruitment, Mennonite Mission Network, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515, 574-523-3008, or email staffrecruitment@Mennonitemission.net.

Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster (Pa.), a growing congregation of 250+ adults and 130 children and youth, seeks applicants for a half-time ***associate pastor*** and a half-time ***director of children and youth ministry***. Apply by April 30; positions could be combined. Contact Ruth Mellinger Martin through the church office: 392-7567 or cmcl@mennonite.net. See job descriptions at: cmcl.pa.us.mennonite.net.

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No such thing as a good divorce

Gordon Houser

Remember when divorce was one of the major sins? No one who was divorced could be ordained. The subject was even talked about in the pulpit. Now divorce is common. It's nearly as common among church members as it is in the U.S. population, where the projected divorce rate for first marriages is 43 percent, while for remarriages it's about 60 percent.

Perhaps for fear of shaming the many couples who get divorces, we have largely ignored the subject. Also largely ignored, according to Elizabeth Marquardt, are the children of divorced parents. Her book *Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce* (Crown, 2005, $24.95) is based on a survey of 1,500 young adults, which allowed her to compare the experiences of children of divorced parents with the experiences of children of married parents. She is a graduate of the University of Chicago Divinity School and a researcher with the Institute for American Values.

That the subject crosses the theological spectrum is evident in that both *The Christian Century* (Feb. 7) and *Christianity Today* (March) published interviews with Marquardt.

A child of divorce herself, she is particularly interested in the impact of divorce on children's moral and religious lives. She found that children of divorce are 14 percent less likely to be a member of a house of worship and about 14 percent less likely to say they are very or fairly religious.

At the same time, 38 percent of the grown children of divorce agreed with the statement, "God became the father or parent I never had in real life."

Noting the title of her book, Marquardt says children of divorce "grow up traveling between two worlds and feel early on the need to confront—alone—the big moral questions: What is right and wrong? What do I believe? Where do I belong? Is there a God? What is true?"

Thus these children become independent and lose their childhoods. And while some rise to the task, others cannot, Marquardt says. "This helps explain why children of divorce are two to three times more likely than other children to end up with very serious social and emotional problems."

Asked if a more realistic understanding of the impact of divorce on children would have measurable effect on divorce rates, Marquardt says it could have some effect. She encourages people to save marriages that are ending because of boredom or a desire for a new partner or not being sure you really love your partner or because you've grown apart. "Those issues are troubling to adults, but they are not that apparent to kids."

Marquardt finds the "good divorce" language damaging. "It makes parents think that divorce won't be such a big deal so long as they do it right," she says. "There's such a thing as necessary divorce, but there's no such thing as a good divorce."

She sees necessary divorces arising from high-conflict marriages characterized by abuse, violence or serious and frequent quarreling. But these represent a minority, since "two-thirds of divorces end low-conflict marriages."

She notes that with the advent of no-fault divorce in the 1960s, experts predicted that marriages overall would be happier. The opposite has happened. While it used to be hard to get out of a horrendous marriage, she says, now we have "a trickle-down notion of happiness: If the parents are happy, the children will be happy."

But that idea has no bearing on children's experience, Marquardt says. "Frankly, if theirs is not a high-conflict household, children in many ways aren't all that concerned if their parents are happy." TM

FILMS

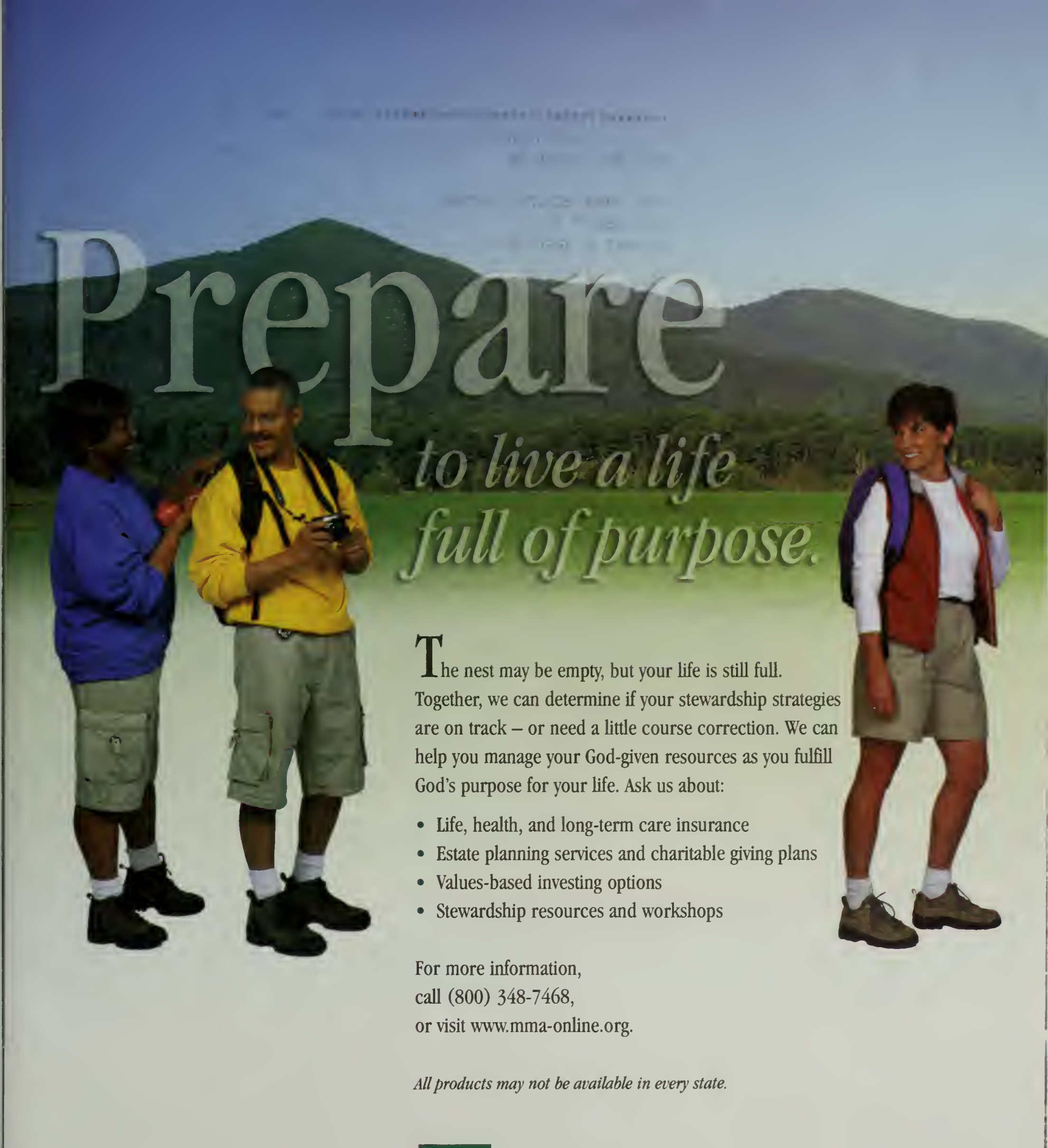
The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada (R) centers on a long trip made by Pete Perkins from Texas to Mexico to fulfill a promise to his friend to bury him in his native village. Pete kidnaps Mike Norton, the trigger-happy border patrolman who shoots Melquiades, and forces him to dig up the body from an unmarked grave. The film shows the stark climate of a Texas border town and the friendship of Pete and Melquiades. We also witness the hospitality of Mexicans and the casual racism of some of the officers. Still, each character is complex. Mike's repentance is forced yet genuine. The film shows the mixture of harsh and tender experiences of people in a world most of us don't see.

DVDS

The Lord of War (R), based on real events, uses a light tone to tell the dark story of a Ukrainian immigrant who becomes a weapons dealer. He makes tons of money and operates freely because it serves the interest of the world's largest weapons dealer, the U.S. government.

BOOKS

In the midst of Lent, journeying with Jesus toward his death in Jerusalem, is a good time to reflect on our death. **Death and the Rest of Our Life** by John Garvey (Eerdmans, 2005, $10) is brief (only 88 pages) but packed with insights. Garvey uses stories and theological reflection to argue against taking death lightly. "Our concrete love for particular people matter deeply," he writes, "and the more deeply we understand what our love means ... the more we will understand how mortality can either instruct us in love, or lead us to a kind of grasping that ultimately is not compassionate, not at all loving." **Meditations for the Grieving** by Richard L. Morgan (Herald Press, 2005, $9.99) offers counsel to those grieving the death of a loved one or the "living death" of Alzheimer's disease or other terminal illnesses. The 30 meditations take readers through the span of grief, from when death comes to the first difficult days to when life begins again. The format and the writing feel disjointed, and some of the counsel seems too simplistic. Garvey's book has more theological depth.



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Everett J. Thomas

Hold on to chastity

chastity (n) 1: the quality or state of being chaste as a: abstention from unlawful intercourse b: abstention from all sexual intercourse c: purity in conduct and intention—Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Tenth Edition

Chastity” is a word that seems quaint and irrelevant in our culture. The dictionary's definition offers at least three ways to understand it. The first definition refers to what is legal in our society. The second definition is demonstrated by the Roman Catholic Church, for example, through vows of celibacy. But the third usage is relevant for our church: In sexual relations we are called to purity of conduct and intention.

“We believe that God intends marriage to be a covenant between one man and one woman for life,” says Article 19 of Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, “According to Scripture, right sexual union takes place only within the marriage relationship.”

Chastity, as defined by Mennonite Church USA, connects with the dictionary definition as “purity in conduct and purpose.” But what of those who break this covenant? After all, sexual dynamics and temptations in human relationships do not automatically disappear when we get married.

The standard for chastity is absolute; when any of us violates that standard, sin is sin.

Gerald Kaufman and Marlene Kaufman, whose careers include counseling couples in marriages troubled by extramarital affairs, describe how we can hold on to chastity in relationships by preventing friendships from “going too far” (page 12).

But a premarital or extramarital affair does not mean a person remains unchaste forever. If we believe that no sin is too great for God's forgiveness, then any sexual practice at variance with the beliefs of our church can be forgiven.

Consequently, it is possible for those who were not virgin when they married—or who have succumbed to extramarital affairs—to recover the virtue of chastity. To illustrate, our friend Laurie Oswald Robinson offers a courageous account of her story (page 8). Sexually active earlier in life, both she and her future spouse decided to wait until their wedding night to consummate their marriage. This chastity—a new virginity—brings joy in the waiting.

Chastity is a very high standard. It is more than not having extramarital affairs—or waiting until the wedding night. It is not only about conduct. It is also about intentions.

“But I say to you,” Jesus says in Matthew 5:28, “that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

If we embrace this difficult teaching by Jesus, then adultery is common not only in our society but also in our church. I confess that when those unsolicited offers for porn appear in my emails, I sometimes linger a bit too long before deleting them. This too is a lack of chastity.

However, when it comes to being chaste, there is one group of church members whose integrity I especially respect: those who carry a bisexual or homosexual orientation but remain faithful to Biblical teachings.

Our church has been clear in its documents that we do not consider such orientation to be sin. But often our attitudes toward these sisters and brothers suggest otherwise. I can only imagine how difficult is their obedience. I've learned from several friends and acquaintances that acting on their same-sex orientation can carry with it harsh self-retribution. Furthermore, the unspoken sanctions by our church against members who succumb to same-sex sins are far greater than the sanctions against heterosexuals whose conduct is anything but chaste.

This disparity is patently unfair; it is a justice issue we must confront broadly in congregational life and the pastoral care to which each member is entitled. The standard for chastity is absolute; when any of us violate that standard, sin is sin.

But the good news is that God forgives our shameful sexual conduct and intentions. When we confess those sins and believe that God forgives us, we are once again chaste.—*ejt*

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Still fighting temptation

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

Why does no one talk about temptation anymore? We talk about the temptation of materialism in our wealthy Western culture, then we just sigh, as if there is no use talking about the state of our world since we don't believe we can change it anyway. Materialism has become the only socially acceptable temptation to discuss in the church today. However, I seem to experience other temptations that are equally bothersome to my sense of responsibility and salvation.

For example, isn't anyone else tempted to talk when we should keep quiet? When you learn something about someone who has hurt you, do you not want to tell others, as if to say, I knew that was the kind of person they were all along. The vindication comes in the telling. It is in the telling that we betray others and the God who loves us.

As a pastor, I hear the stories of many who may have been hurt by one specific person. How I want to tell them they are not alone, that Alice also was hurt, and Bert and James. But I cannot pass on that information because Alice, James and Bert have told me their stories in confidence. The temptation to talk is one form of betrayal that I fight.

And isn't anyone else tempted to slight the whole truth? Not being completely honest is par for the course in most conversations these days. But I have never heard anyone confess to that temptation. I know Mennonites are tempted to keep the truth from each other for many reasons. We usually hide the truth because we don't want others, least of all others in the congregation, to know our financial situations. The only exception to this rule occurs when we are in dire straits and won't survive without help. But does anyone else in your congregation know how much credit card debt you have?

Some of us hide our wealth in a multitude of disguises, such as substantial retirement accounts, investments, rental properties and second homes. Why can't we be honest with each other and admit our ownership of these luxuries? Some don't even want to write down a pledge for their annual tithe to the church lest anyone find out how much it is.

Are we so afraid to tell the whole truth because the tradition of criticism in the church community has destroyed our ability to be vulnerable? Perhaps we have been betrayed by that talking in the past and won't allow it to happen to us again. But now we betray the truth of our lives when we cannot admit who we are and what we have. We should speak with truth and be silent with wisdom.

Here is another temptation. Isn't anyone else tempted to befriend people from other cultures, make it clear to them we are Christian but not condemn them because of their beliefs? I find it contrary to all I have experienced of God to tell others they have no hope of eternal life because they do not follow Jesus. Joseph Hough wrote: "What is essential in Christian faith is that we know we have seen the face of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It is not essential to believe that no one else has seen God and experienced redemption in another time and place." So every time I hear someone claim there are many ways to come to God, I feel a pull to accept that possibility. Yet I also know the Scriptures. I know what John 14 says. So I admit to being tempted to deny Jesus as the only way, truth and life in situations like this. It appears it was not only Judas and Peter who were tempted to betray Christ. We, too, are tempted and willingly give up our peace because our hearts and minds are not always stayed on God, as Judah sang from experience (Isaiah 26:3).

I confess I am still fighting temptation. The temptations are many for all of us. All I can say is that I continue to cling to Peter's example. Though he failed, he did not give up. I am tempted over and over, but I will not betray my Lord by giving up on this journey with Christ. TM

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 7, April 4, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Cover: fotolia.com stock image

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 40033185, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Weak support for peace position

Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, Article 22, says, "We believe that peace is the will of God. God created the world in peace, and God's peace is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who is our peace and the peace of the whole world. Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation and practicing nonresistance even in the face of violence and warfare."

Now we learn that in the Virginia Mennonite Conference "40 percent supported the idea of the United States participating in war" and "59 percent of those completing the survey felt it was OK for Mennonites to use violence in self-defense" ("Survey: Weak Support for Peace Position," March 7). So what does this imply for Mennonite Church USA? Does Virginia Conference stand alone? Or is this a reflection of Mennonite opinion across the wider church?—*John Halder, Parnell, Iowa*

Re "Survey: Weak Support for Peace Position": First, participants should be commended for their willingness to "look into the mirror" and let others see also. The results of this poll are not all that surprising as we seemingly race toward a synchronous relationship with mainstream "Christianity" that puts nationalism ahead of a commitment to the way of the cross. It does, however, sadden me. There are a few simple things that can be done to turn the tide: Do not change the message to make people comfortable let the message change the person. Drop labels that demean and degrade people. Teach and preach from Scripture. Examine heroes of faith from Genesis to Tom Fox. Call Anabaptist and Mennonite leaders to lead congregations.—*Dan Lais, Lebanon, Ore.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Although the date of this issue is five days before Holy Week begins, this is our Easter issue. Linda Gehman Peachey's cover story takes a fresh look at what it means for us to "take up the cross" as Jesus did on Good Friday (page 8). Bert Newton offers another look at the cross as the last of three apocalyptic events in Jesus' life (page 12). The editorial examines some details about Good Friday recorded in Matthew 27; they suggest a permanent change in the way believers understand what happens after life on this earth (page 32). But this issue also has a lot of news. Mennonite World Conference's "mini-assembly" in Pasadena, Calif., March 9-15 is covered in a special section on pages 19-21. Perhaps the most significant news: Our global Anabaptist family has agreed for the first time on our "core values" (page 19).—*ejt*

Pro-life means antiwar

In "Pro-life Means Antiwar" (Speaking Out, March 7), Timothy Allen fails to make the important distinction between an innocent unborn child and a guilty criminal. In Romans 13:4 Paul explicitly recognizes government as God's "agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." What could the warning "he does not bear the sword for nothing" possibly mean except that those in earthly authority are responsible for the punishment of wrongdoers?

Saddam Hussein had a history of attacking Kurdish civilians with poison gas, invading Kuwait and launching missiles at Israel and Saudi Arabia. Because of his past actions he had an international obligation to fully comply with United Nations' weapons inspectors. He was given over a decade to do so before a coalition of governments went to war against Iraq. We can debate if war was appropriate for these circumstances, but making war is a God-given prerogative of earthly authorities. —*Steven J. Harnish, Lancaster, Pa.*

I affirm Timothy P. Allen's "Pro-life Means Antiwar." He ended with the following statement: "Yet many in the pro-life movement either remain silent, or more often, support this war. They are thus commendably antiabortion, but they are not consistently pro-life."

Allen failed, however, to flip the coin and expose the side of the issue that I find all too common within the peace churches. Many in the pro-peace movement either remain silent—or more often support—abortion. They are thus commendably antiwar, but they are not consistently pro-life. —*Jana King Peachey, Lititz, Pa.*

Responses to Readers Say letters

In his Feb. 7 letter, Lynn Miller said, "The truth is that giving to denominational programs is falling because we are no longer thankful worshippers giving in response to God's love for us." Although there is some validity to this statement, another issue has affected giving to the denomination—perhaps more than its leaders recognize or admit. Many members of Mennonite Church USA do not feel a connection to the denomination. With changes in local church membership within area conferences, changes in area conferences' relationships to Mennonite Church USA and changes in leadership from the "old" General Conference and Mennonite Church organizations to the "new" Mennonite Church USA, we don't have a strong sense of who the denomination is and what it is doing. We have lost that familiar connection to people we knew and trusted—people who articulated the vision of the denomination and its various ministries not only in printed media from conference headquarters but also in person in our congregations. I see in my own congregation strong personal relationships to Christ and to the local body. Giving to the church has consistently grown over the past number of years—there is trust, passion and impact there. We are thankful. However, I don't sense that same commitment toward Mennonite Church USA.—*Judy L. Reimer, Hesston, Kan.*

I'd like to clear up a factual error in Donald Steelberg's letter in the Feb. 21 issue ("Churches Being Bought Off") and challenge his sweeping indictment of the pharmaceutical industry. First: Lilly Endowment, Inc., benefactor of numerous congregations and schools, is in no way controlled by Eli Lilly and Company, my employer. The Lilly Endowment was founded in 1937 by Eli Lilly, chief executive of the company that bears his (and his grandfather's) name. The only connection between the two entities is the influence in Lilly affairs that the Endowment enjoys as Lilly's largest shareholder. So Lilly (the company) has no means of "buying off our churches."

Now the challenge. Without any supporting evidence, Steelberg suggested that all pharmaceutical companies act in "bad faith" and lumps them with producers of tobacco, liquor and munitions. While pharmaceutical companies are as a whole no more ethical than other large industrial concerns, they are at least making lifesaving and life-enhancing products and are far more heavily regulated (i.e. accountable) than most industries. There can, and should be, extensive debate about pricing, reimbursement, government regulation and the best means for discovering and producing medications, but broad-brush libeling of an entire industry is no more acceptable than the same treatment of a demographic group would be.—*Sam Bixler, Indianapolis*

I am compelled to respond to Harvey Yoder's critique of building projects at Mennonite schools ("Addicted to our Affluence?" March 7). Having set up a school library in Africa, I am well aware of the challenges and limitations faced by church educational institutions in developing countries. However, we should not expect libraries in North American Mennonite colleges and seminaries to provide services and care for collections in facilities that are woefully inadequate.

In 1975, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., desperately needed a new library, but there wasn't enough money. Instead, a basement was constructed with the expectation that "in a few years" the new library would be built on top. For more than 30 years the finest Mennonite theological library in the world has been in a windowless basement with bare concrete walls. People who cannot manage the stairs may not browse the book collection because there is no elevator. Rainwater regularly spreads across the carpet under the book stacks, and several times we have dealt with water-soaked books.

New libraries must be "state-of-the-art" when they are built because they typically serve the institution for 30 to 40 years without addition or renovation. When compromises are made to save money, generations of students and faculty endure inadequate facilities. The library materials we have spent millions of dollars to acquire and organize are underutilized and are at risk of permanent damage.—*Eileen Saner, Goshen, Ind.*

God or country?

Everett J. Thomas' editorial of "God or Country?" (Feb. 21) is one of the best I have read in a long time. I especially like the last sentence: "Such obedience requires us to consider all who reside among us as U.S. citizens and love them as much as we love ourselves." Were Jesus, Mary and Joseph illegal immigrants when they fled to Egypt ahead of Herod and his murderous staff?—*Carole M. Marnet, Seattle*

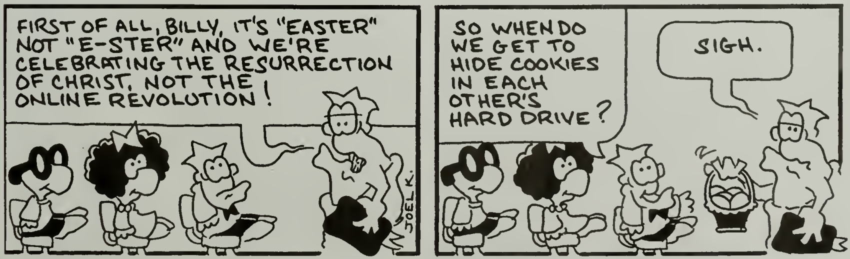
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

In terms of my relationships with friends, family and church (49 votes):

- ○ I'm content (41%)
- ○ They could be better (39%)
- ○ I'm lonely (20%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


FIRST OF ALL, BILLY, IT'S "EASTER" NOT "E-STER" AND WE'RE CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, NOT THE ONLINE REVOLUTION!
JOEL K.
SO WHEN DO WE GET TO HIDE COOKIES IN EACH OTHER'S HARD DRIVE?
SIGH.

IN BRIEF

Ohio church wins advocacy award

The Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office has named Lafayette Christian Fellowship of West Lafayette, Ohio, as winner of its sixth annual Congregational Advocacy Award, for its commitment to abolishing the death penalty in Ohio. The award recognizes a congregation that works to advocate for social justice in a way that is creative, persistent and prophetic and that involves a significant portion of its members to witness on behalf of others at the national, international, local or state levels. The congregation, totaling approximately 25 people, began its advocacy by writing letters against the death penalty to the governor of Ohio, Bob Taft. Lafayette Christian Fellowship continues its work by sending at least one church member to protest each execution at the Lucasville State Prison.—*MCC*

Driedger named managing editor of *Leader*

June Mears Driedger has been named managing editor for *Leader*, a quarterly magazine designed to equip pastors and lay leaders within Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. Since its inception three years ago this position has been held by Byron Rempel Burkholder, who continues as editor for *Rejoice!* —*Faith & Life Resources*

Bluffton University receives bomb threat

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton University received a call at the campus switchboard at 2:15 p.m. March 14 in which the unidentified caller indicated an explosive device was located in Centennial Hall, the primary academic building on campus. The caller said the device would detonate in 30 minutes.

Bluffton administration took the call seriously and immediately evacuated the building. The Bluffton police and fire departments were called. A bomb squad from Lima searched the building and reported at 4 p.m. that no device was found and that the building was safe to enter. Evening classes were held as scheduled.—*Bluffton University*

Peace-it-Together draws 250 Canadian youth

WINNIPEG—Peace-it-Together, the annual Canadian Mennonite University conference for youth, held March 10-12 at CMU, brought together more than 250 youth from across Canada for worship, workshops, drama, urban and square dancing, karaoke and the annual MennoNITE live concert.

The theme for this year's conference was "Somebody Better Say Something." Feature speaker Brenda Matthews of Chicago explored themes around poetry and protest, peace through the arts and speaking up for change. With her were hip-hop ministers Aaron McCain and Bryan Sanchez.

At the visual art and graffiti workshop, each participant received a blank canvas and worked with others. The goal was to make sure everyone made a mark on every canvas, an exercise to show how each individual's work can be enhanced through sharing.

Other workshops included a trip to Winnipeg's North End, a tour of different art centers and galleries, and topics such as "Theologian on the Hot Seat," "Stories and Songs" and "Sex Wars and Gender Peace."—*Canadian Mennonite University*

HUMANITARIAN AID
HUMANITARIAN
Not for Sale
HUMANITARIAN AID

Doug Penner

MCC ships school kits to war-torn Afghanistan

Corneil Hiebert, John Guenther and Alfred Loewen load some of the nearly 9,000 school kits being sent from Mennonite Central Committee's Manitoba warehouse to Afghanistan. Help the Afghan Children—an MCC partner—will distribute the school kits upon arrival in Afghanistan. HTAC is a nonprofit agency that focuses its efforts on providing quality education to Afghan girls and boys. In Paghman, west of Kabul, MCC provides a grant to HTAC to manage a school for 2,000 boys and girls and to help train teachers. Another MCC/CFGB project is providing nutritious food for 5,000 tuberculosis patients and their families.—*MCC*

Former MCC Washington Office director dies

AKRON, Pa.—A courageous pioneer who was a prophetic Mennonite voice to the U.S. government and a former co-pastor of one of the early interracial Mennonite congregations has died.

Delton Willis Franz, 73, former director of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Washington Office died March 6 after a lengthy illness.

At the peak of the civil rights movement and protests against the Vietnam War in 1968, Franz came to Washington from Chicago to open the new MCC Washington Office.

Franz was MCC's primary liaison to the U.S. government, bringing the concerns of MCC workers and partners around the world to policymakers. He retired in 1994 after 26 years as director.

"For him the first move of political action was always to clarify and deepen the church's understanding of issues of justice and peace," says John Stoner, former MCC U.S. Peace Section director. "The second move was to witness that understanding to the powers in Washington."

Franz served as co-pastor of the Woodlawn Mennonite Church in southside Chicago with Vincent Harding from 1958 to 1961.

"Delton was a very compassionate person. That compassion was the deepest driving force of his life," says Vincent Harding, who is now director of Veterans for Hope in Denver.

Franz and Harding were two of a group of five men, three white and two African-American, who traveled together to the southern states in 1958 and eventually met Martin Luther King.

Franz was a founding member of Churches for Middle East Peace, a coalition of 20 religious groups. He attended the Oslo agreement signing ceremony at the White House in 1993. He also focused on U.S. policies toward Latin America and traveled widely throughout the world.

Born Dec. 12, 1932, in Hutchinson, Kan., Delton Franz was the son of John J. Franz and Sara Siemens Franz. He graduated from Bethel College in 1954 and married Marian Claassen that June.

Franz is survived by his wife, Marian C. Franz of

Courtesy photo

ietnam's 'Mennonite Six' together

ie six Vietnamese Mennonites who were imprisoned for vari-us lengths of time over the past two years pose for a photo arch 8 in Ho Chi Minh City. The photo—shown to the ennonite World Conference General Council meeting March in Pasadena, Calif.—was described as an expression of anks for the prayers and support of Mennonites around the orld. From left are church worker Le Thi Hong Lien, evangel- Nguyen Thanh Nhan, evangelist Nguyen Van Phuong, pas-r Nguyen Hong Quang, evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach and urch worker Nguyen Hieu Nghia. Thach was the last to be leased, after two years in prison, on March 2.—*Meetinghouse*

Washington; son Gregory C. Franz of Pasadena, Calif.; daughters Gayle S. Franz of Newton, Kan. and Coretta J. Franz-Eby of Lancaster, Pa.; son-in-law Rich Eby and grandchildren Justine and Adam Franz-Eby of Lancaster, Pa.; sister Eldine Harder and brother Leroy Franz, both of Newton, Kan. —*Mark Beach for MCC*

Bethel College names award recipients

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—The Awards Committee of the Bethel College Alumni Association has named Terrance (Terry) Rempel, Bethlehem, West Bank, and Alain Epp Weaver and Sonia Weaver, Amman, Jordan, as the recipients of Young Alumnus Awards for 2006.

Rempel is one of the founders of the BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights in Bethlehem. From 1998 to 2004, he was coordinator of research and information for BADIL, and from 2004-05, he was senior researcher with the organization. He is now an independent consultant for BADIL.

Alain Epp Weaver and Sonia Weaver became co-country representatives for Palestine, Jordan and Iraq for Mennonite Central Committee in July 2004. They were previously MCC country representatives for Palestine (since 2000), worked in the Gaza Strip as MCC project coordinators in 1996 and 1999, and taught English in the West Bank from 1992-95.—*Bethel College*

Greiser new Pastoral Ministries director

HESSTON, Kan.—David Greiser, a member of the pastoral team at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church for the past 10 years, has been appointed the new director of the Pastoral Ministries program at Hesston College.

Greiser's pastoral experience also includes serving as a pastor in a small mission church at North Park Mennonite Church, Grand Rapids, Mich. (1980-83); as a church planter of West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship in an inner-city neighborhood (1984-93); and as an interim pastor in 1994 of a Southern Baptist congregation in Lebanon, Ky.

David Greiser

As a teacher, he has been an adjunct professor in Mennonite, Baptist and interdenominational seminaries, teaching preaching, hermeneutics, theology and church history.

Greiser will replace Palmer Becker, who is retiring at the end of the 2005-06 school year. He has directed the Pastoral Ministries program since 1999.—*Hesston College*

Florida church marks third year of Iraq War

GAINESVILLE, Fla.—Karen Horst Cobb of Santa Fe, N.M., spoke at the Sunday morning worship service at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Gainesville March 19 on John's account of Jesus and the money changers in the Temple. The congregation used a litany of repentance composed by Jim Loney, one of the Christian Peacemaker Teams hostages in Iraq.

That afternoon, Eve MacMaster, pastor of Emmanuel, and Jim Wright, associate pastor of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, led a vigil of remembrance in the Gainesville Downtown Community Plaza to mark the third anniversary of the Iraq War. About 60 people from different churches participated in a ritual remembering the victims of war. Paul Wright of Emmanuel led the group in singing "Kyrie Eleison (Lord Have Mercy)," "The Lord is My Shepherd" and "If the War Goes On."—*Richard K. MacMaster*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> "Our emphasis should not be on possessing a system in which all questions are answered but precisely on witness to the place and the identity that we have been invited to live in. We are to show what we see, to reproduce the life of God as it has been delivered to us by the anointed."
>
> —*Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Cantebury, from a speech in February at the assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil, printed in* The Christian Century

IN BRIEF

Double standard?

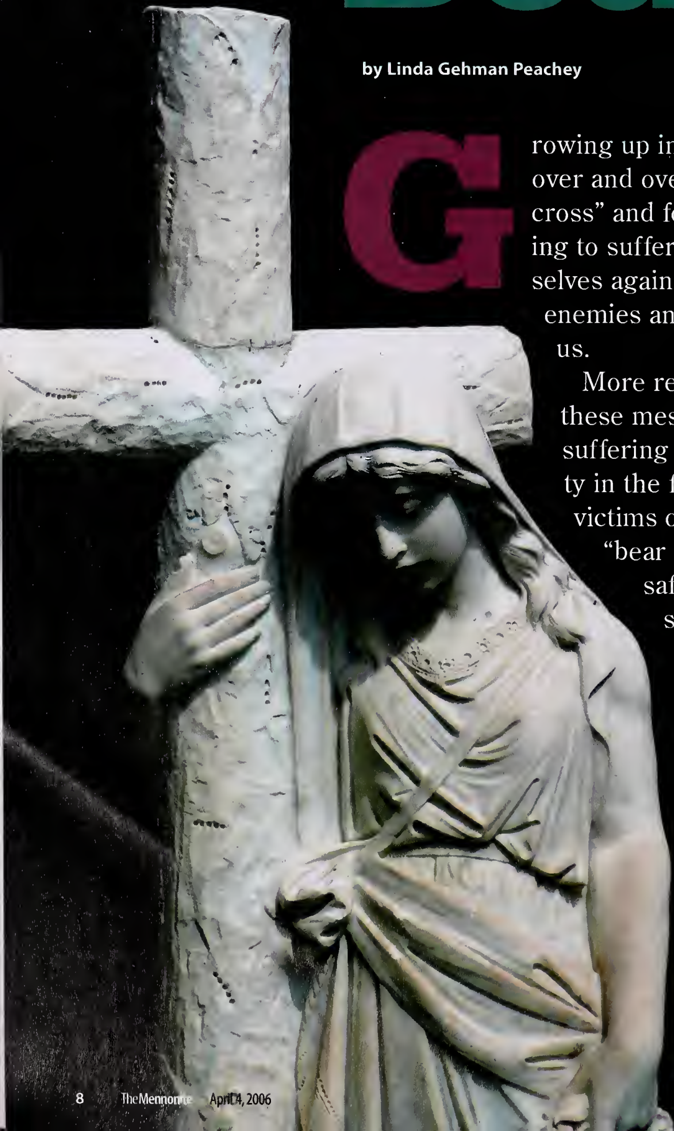
In February, a New York court found Iraqi-American Rafil Dhafir, 57, guilty of violating U.S. sanctions against Iraq and of money laundering. He directed Help the Needy, a charity that sent funds for food and aid to children suffering under the sanctions. Dhafir, who was held without bail for two years before his trial, received a 22-year jail term. In a Texas case, five Palestinian-American Muslim brothers were found guilty of a total of 23 counts related to violating sanctions against Libya and Syria. Each count carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in jail and up to a $500,000 fine. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service is deporting their wives, which leaves 12 U.S.-born children with an uncertain status. In cases of non-Muslim Americans or corporations charged with violating sanctions, the government has asked for warnings or civil penalties, not jail.—*Sojourners*

Goshen social work student awarded Student of the Year

Aileac Deegan, a Goshen (Ind.) College junior from Goshen, was honored March 9 as a social work Student of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers, Indiana Chapter Region 2. Besides being a full-time student and mother, Deegan serves as executive director of Ryan's Place, a Center for Grieving Children and Teens.—*Goshen College*

Bearing

by Linda Gehman Peachey



Growing up in the Mennonite Church, I heard over and over that we must "take up our cross" and follow Jesus; we should be willing to suffer harm rather than defend ourselves against violence; we should love our enemies and do good to those who mistreat us.

More recently I have struggled with these messages. I fear this emphasis on suffering love has too often led to passivity in the face of evil. It may encourage victims of violence and evil to simply "bear their cross" rather than seek safety and justice. It may glorify sacrifice and even death rather than promote the life and wholeness God intends for us. This is especially true for women, who over the generations have been told to bear a "cross" of abuse from their husbands or other family members.

What did Jesus mean by urging us to "take up our cross"? What should we do in the face of evil and violence?

the cross

What did Jesus mean by urging us to take up our cross?

1. Taking up the cross does not mean meek submission to evil. Jesus was not passive in the face of injustice and violence. He was active and assertive. That is why he was crucified. His actions and preaching threatened the ruling authorities and their control over the people. The cross did not result from timidity but from resistance to evil.

Jesus invites us also to seek ways of opposing injustice and wrong. Too often we think there are only two responses to evil: either meek submission or aggressive retaliation. But we can seek other ways to respond, ways that respect both ourselves and the other while also avoiding harm and stopping the violence.

Sometimes this may mean leaving an oppressive or violent situation, such as when the children of Israel left Egypt or Christians in the early church scattered to avoid persecution. Similarly, Mennonites have fled persecution and war, people have escaped from slavery, and women have left dangerous and oppressive relationships.

It is not suffering but God's love that has the power to bring good out of distress, healing out of pain, redemption out of sin, resurrection out of death.

At other times, one may be more assertive, actively challenging abusive people and oppressive systems. For example, early Anabaptists confronted their religious and political leaders, the people of India pressured the British government for independence, and African Americans have struggled courageously for freedom, civil rights, respect and dignity.

Tragically, there are times when there is no way out, no way to avoid evil and death. This, too, is the meaning of the cross, the terrible reality that too many people suffer and die and God does not step in to stop it. Far too often, sin appears to have the upper hand, the last word.

2. Nevertheless, suffering itself is not redemptive. Suffering is not God's will, not for anyone. Indeed, by raising Jesus from the dead, God acted to undermine such violence. God was not seeking death but life. Further, the resurrection affirmed that it was not Jesus who disobeyed God's will but those who tried to silence him, those who sought to punish him.

Why then did God allow the crucifixion? If God could raise Jesus from the dead, why not prevent it in the first place? Indeed, if suffering is not God's will, why is there so much death and evil all around us? Unfortunately, there are no simple answers.

One might say God allows the laws of nature to operate without actively intervening. Or that God permits evil as a consequence of human free will. Much as a loving parent desperately wants a child to choose well but cannot always make it so, God allows us to choose wrong as well as right. Further, God allows our human institutions and social systems to also fall into sin. Created to serve the common good, these structures often end up serving their own interests and hindering God's will.

No matter how we answer these questions, we can seek and know God's love. We can trust God's desire for us to grow and learn and heal. We can rely on God's promise to be with us even through the most difficult times. And this is what redeems us. It is not suffering but God's love that has the power to bring good out of distress, healing out of pain, redemption out of sin, resurrection out of death.

3. Still, God does not guarantee our safety. God desires that we be safe and whole yet does not always intervene, does not always rescue us from danger. Herein lies a profound paradox. Choosing life may involve risks. We may feel called to leave

Continued on page 10

Jesus was not passive in the face of injustice and violence. He was active and assertive. That is why he was crucified.

Continued from page 9

what is familiar and face the unknown. We may feel led to challenge evil and its power over ourselves or others. This is what Jesus meant in urging his followers to "deny themselves and take up their cross" (Mark 8:34-37). Not that we should seek suffering and death but that we have the courage and freedom to follow God's call, even in the face of danger. That we not let fear bind and destroy us but that we trust in God no matter what.

The questions do not go away. How do we know when we are choosing life, not death? As we risk change, we will need to keep assessing the steps we take. Are these steps life-giving or do they reinforce the powers of death? Do they honor and encourage God's Spirit within us or do they destroy what is precious and good? And do they help all involved become more accountable, responsible human beings? Certainly we will need much prayer and imagination as well as other spiritual and community resources to help us with these questions.

Too often the church has insisted on love and grace from its weaker members yet has been unwilling to require accountability from those in positions of power.

4. Finally, God does not excuse sin or evil. Jesus urged repentance and change, not only in our beliefs and attitudes but in our actions and relationships with others. He urged people to take responsibility for their behavior, change their ways and follow him.

Too often the church has insisted on love and grace from its weaker members yet has been unwilling to require accountability from those in positions of power. Jesus did just the opposite. Although he expected repentance from everyone, his strongest words were for religious leaders who abused their power and exploited others.

We who claim to follow him—especially church leaders—must also find ways to urge repentance and accountability from those who abuse and mistreat others. We need to learn more about the dynamics of power, forgiveness and reconciliation. And just as Jesus did, we must emphasize deeds over words.

What does it mean to "bear the cross"? There are no easy answers. But let us affirm that this is not a call to simple submission and death. Rather it is an invitation to life and faith. It is a call to take risks, trusting that God's love and justice will prevail. May God grant us much wisdom, courage and grace as we follow Jesus on this way.

Linda Gehman Peachey works for the Women's Advocacy Program of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. in Akron, Pa., and is a member of East Chestnut St. Mennonite Church.

Easter visit

by Barbara Esch Shisler

The state hospital meets old expectations:
gates, walls, locks,
dark halls, bareness and chill.
I come again and again all winter
but my words, hands, prayers and presence
fail in grace. Nothing means.
I go home cold and restless,
wishing for rest even in death
for all who dwell in torment.

Today it's April. I go without words
bearing lilacs in a paper cup.
Her stark face bows into the fragrance.
She does not speak or look up
but turns back to her ward
moving like a soul at prayer,
breathing the rising purple radiance.

Barbara Esch Shisler lives in Telford, Pa.

Sparrow

by Jeanne Lohmann

When we weren't looking
a clay-colored sparrow
came in, flew circles around the room,
bumping into the window
hunting a way out.

You said we had to
do something, and finally
caught the bird in a towel,
carried it to the door,
but it looked limp and dusty,
already dead.

You stroked the feathers,
then the head and eyes moved
and the bird lifted out of your hand,
flew to a tree.

Old man, story-teller, you
said you knew brief satisfaction
in being god, asked if death
comes like this, ending
our frantic circles
in an airless room, asked
if we are held with such care
all the way to an open door.

Jeanne Lohmann lives in Olympia, Wash.

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The Transfiguration:

A study of Mark 9:2-13

by Bert Newton

The Transfiguration passage in Mark (9:2-13) ends with an odd saying by Jesus about Elijah: "Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. ... But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him" (9:12-13).

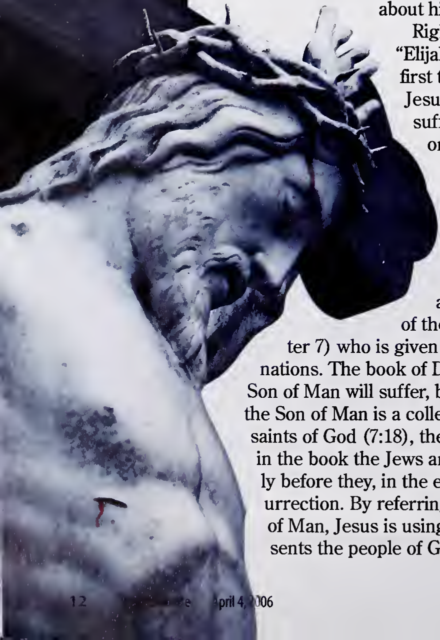
Everyone agrees that the Elijah Jesus refers to is John the Baptist (see Matthew 11:14 and Luke 1:17), but where is it written that Elijah would be killed, and how can his execution be reconciled with "coming first to restore all things"? Malachi 4:5 states that "he will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents," and Sirach 48:10 adds that he will "restore the tribes of Jacob." John's ministry of baptism for repentance seems to fulfill these texts in the sense that he embarked on a ministry of restoration, but that ministry was cut short by his arrest and execution, an event not foretold in any prophetic text. So what is Jesus talking about when he says, "and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him"?

Right after saying that "Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things," Jesus talks about his own suffering before he goes on to say that Elijah already came and was killed by the authorities. In talking about his own suffering, he refers to himself as the "Son of Man," a messianic figure out of the book of Daniel (chapter 7) who is given dominion over the nations. The book of Daniel does not say the Son of Man will suffer, but the text does say the Son of Man is a collective image for the saints of God (7:18), the Jews, and elsewhere in the book the Jews are said to suffer greatly before they, in the end, experience a resurrection. By referring to himself as the Son of Man, Jesus is using an image that represents the people of God who must suffer. He identifies himself as a messianic figure who embodies the whole community of God's people, leading them through death and resurrection.

In trying to explain about Elijah/John, Jesus seems to parallel Elijah's fate with his own. Elijah did come to restore all things, but his victory is not the sort of victory that was expected. Rather, like Jesus, Elijah/John only found victory through suffering and death, the way of the cross. The prophets say the Holy One and the Holy people of God must suffer and die before they are victorious in resurrection (e.g. Isaiah 53, Daniel 8-12). Elijah can only participate in this victory, can only restore all things, by participating in the death and resurrection required of all of God's people. So in that sense, it is written of him also.

And that is the point of this whole transfiguration text: The way of the cross is the only way to victory. There are three apocalyptic moments in the Gospel of Mark: at the beginning, in the middle and at the end; Jesus' baptism, his transfiguration and his crucifixion. At the beginning, when Jesus is baptized, the heavens open up, the Spirit descends like a dove onto Jesus, and a voice proclaims, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (1:9-11). In the middle of the Gospel, Jesus goes up on a mountain and is transfigured, appearing with ultra-white robes. Moses and Elijah appear with him, a cloud envelopes them, and a voice says, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him" (9:2-7). At the end of the Gospel, Jesus is on the cross, darkness comes over the land for three hours, and a Roman centurion proclaims, "Truly, this man was the Son of God" (15:33-39). At the beginning, the middle and the end of the Gospel, Jesus is proclaimed to be the Son of God. The first two times, the proclamation comes from heaven, the final time, from a Roman centurion. Scholars call these events "apocalyptic" not only because of the heavenly signs involved but also because the term "apocalypse" means "a revealing." These events reveal something important about Jesus. They reveal that he is the Son of God. They also reveal the way of the cross. The apocalyptic sequence leads to the crucifixion.

While the last apocalyptic event, the crucifixion, fully reveals the way of the cross, the first two fore-



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an apocalypse of the cross

The apocalypse, the major revelation of the Gospel, is that Jesus, the Son of God, leads us to victory through the cross.

shadow this revelation. The first apocalyptic moment occurs at the baptism of Jesus. The early church understood baptism as a symbolic participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5). The second apocalyptic event, the transfiguration, comes right on the heels of Jesus telling his disciples he will be crucified and inviting them to follow him in this way. Then during the actual transfiguration Jesus appears in ultra-white robes, the attire of martyrs (Revelation 6:11; 7:9,13).

The apocalypse, the major revelation of the Gospel, is that Jesus, the Son of God, leads us to victory through the cross. There is no other way. That is why the disciples are forbidden to talk about the transfiguration (v. 9), just as they were previously forbidden to tell anyone that Jesus is the Messiah (8:30). If people find out too early that he is the Messiah, especially if they hear about the transfiguration, they will begin to think the victory is already at hand without the cross. (Peter's desire to build tabernacles on the mountaintop may be evidence of that sort of thinking, since the feast of tabernacles celebrated the Israelites' victorious exodus from slavery in Egypt.) On the mountaintop, the voice from heaven exhorts the disciples to "listen" to Jesus. Jesus has just been teaching them about the way of the cross. That teaching is the one they are to listen to.

The great apocalypse of the Gospel comes at the crucifixion. That is when the "Son of Man comes on the clouds with glory" (8:38, 13:26, 14:62). The transfiguration foreshadows this event when Jesus, dressed in the white robes of martyrs, is enveloped in a cloud.

The cross is the great apocalyptic moment, the revealing of the Son of God, the shaking of the powers. A Roman centurion, whose political allegiance demands that he venerate Caesar as the "Son of God," proclaims that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus displaces Caesar through the cross, through the very instrument by which Caesar executes his enemies. Jesus displaces Caesar through the lips of Caesar's own loyal servant. Darkness covers the land for three hours, an allusion to the three days of darkness over the land of Egypt just prior to the Exodus, a symbolic judgment on the empire. And then the curtain of the temple rips in two, a symbol of victory over the temple establishment, a puppet government of Rome. The Son of God has been revealed and the powers have been shaken from their heavenly places, falling from the sky (13:24-25) because of the advent of "the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (13:26).

The early church understood the cross as the way of victory, that Jesus leads the people of God to victory over the powers through the cross. Paul exclaims in Colossians 2:15 that Jesus, "disarmed the rulers and authorities, and made a public example of them" in the cross. The transfiguration gives us a symbolic preview of this victory, but the symbolism can only be understood in the light of the cross. Without that perspective, the transfiguration is easily misunderstood.

The church has a long history of following Peter rather than Jesus. We don't understand the signs Jesus gives us, so we build our tabernacles too quickly and avoid the way of the cross.

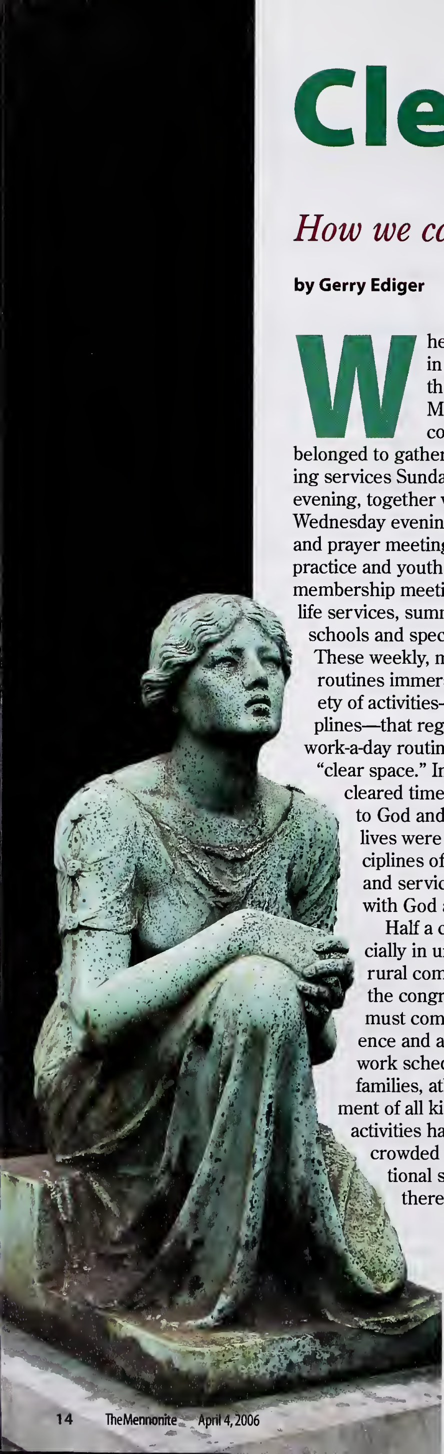
The church has a long history of following Peter rather than Jesus. We don't understand the signs Jesus gives us, so we build our tabernacles too quickly and avoid the way of the cross. But Jesus exhorts us to take up our crosses and follow after him in resistance to the powers and authorities that blaspheme the name of God and grind the face of the poor. We must not declare victory and live easily while the powers wage war against God's poor ones. We must continue to struggle in the prophetic witness of the cross against systems of injustice and warmaking. There is no other way. We must continue to fight the good fight until the stars fall from the sky and we, wearing the white robes of the martyrs, shine with the brightness of the sun and like the stars forever and ever (Daniel 12:3, Matthew 13:43).

Bert Newton is associate pastor of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church.

Clearing space,

How we can create space in our daily life for God

by Gerry Ediger



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When I was growing up in southern Ontario in the 1950s and '60s, the Mennonite Brethren congregation I belonged to gathered frequently, holding services Sunday morning and evening, together with Sunday school, Wednesday evening children's program and prayer meeting, Friday night choir practice and youth meeting, monthly membership meetings, yearly deeper-life services, summer vacation Bible schools and special outreach events. These weekly, monthly and annual routines immersed us in a rich variety of activities—or Christian disciplines—that regularly broke into the work-a-day routine of our family to "clear space." In these breaks of cleared time, we "paid attention" to God and one another. As our lives were centered in the disciplines of worship, learning and service, we "connected" with God and one another.

Half a century later—especially in urban settings but in rural communities as well—the congregational calendar must compete for our presence and attention. Demanding work schedules, dual-career families, athletics, entertainment of all kinds and community activities have successfully crowded into the congregational schedule. As a result, there is limited time to clear space for God and God's people; for some people it consists of an hour on Sunday morning. Our daily lives, in effect, have become profoundly secularized. The result is that our time with God is squeezed into fewer and fewer small moments, and many find their relationship with God to be occasional or relegated just to times of trouble or stress. Even though we desire a personal relationship with Jesus, we don't have time for him.

How can we satisfy this spiritual hunger? Many people today are turning to spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines—the practice of clearing space, paying attention and being connected. Last June, for example, some 1,600 Christians from across the denominational spectrum and around the world gathered in Denver for Renovaré, an international conference on church renewal and spirituality led by Richard J. Foster. At the same time, people are signing up for courses in spiritual formation at monasteries and seminaries alike. Worship services are attracting people who want to find a quiet, contemplative way to encounter God. Mennonite pastors are being trained as spiritual directors so they can serve those in their congregations seeking a deeper spiritual life.

How can people who want more from their relationship with God practice spiritual formation?

To begin with, it helps to see that it's not something only for Catholics—a common misconception among Protestants and Mennonites. Richard Foster, a Quaker, insists that historic Christianity, of whatever tradition, is energized by six streams of awareness and practice: *contemplation*—meditative and prayerful attention to the Bible; *holiness*—careful, obedient, accountable attention to our daily walk; *being Spirit-led*—having an openness to guidance and to the extraordinary ministries of the Holy Spirit in our experience; *evangelical*—being biblically centered in our thinking and doing, coupled with

Our time with God is squeezed into fewer and fewer small moments, and many find their relationship with God to be occasional or relegated just to times of trouble or stress.

paying attention, being connected

a passion for evangelism; *compassionate*—being committed to and active in the ministries of mercy and justice; and *having an incarnational life*—being focused on recognizing and cooperating with the action of God in the small things of daily life. This, he says, is a way of following Jesus that transcends denominations.

C. Arnold Snyder writes about Anabaptist and Mennonite spirituality. He insists that the roots that nourished the spiritual renewal of the 16th-century Anabaptists were buried in the disciplines, practices and attitudes of late medieval Catholic faith ("Spiritual Empowerment Toward Discipleship," *Mennonite Life*, September 2000). In his more recent book, *Following in the Footsteps of Christ: The Anabaptist Tradition* (Orbis, 2004), Snyder writes: "Anabaptist spirituality marked the challenging path that retains its prophetic activity today, calling for surrender to the Spirit of the living God in all things, putting Christ's way into concrete practice in the 'real world' by following in his footsteps."

We can also look back to the wisdom of the early Christian saints, both eastern and western. They have left us records of how they followed Christ while living in the tension between the realities of daily life and the ideals of God's kingdom—the tension between waiting silently for the inbreaking guidance and power of the Spirit and the urgent need to be busy in the works of evangelism and mercy. Amid these tensions, they teach us to constantly and regularly activate our good intentions to attend to God's love, care and correction in the already present but sometimes hidden stuff of our daily routines.

Finally, when we become aware of our spiritual hunger, we need not—and should not—imagine that the answer is to throw ourselves into a frenetic spate of pious activities. Most often, the simplest action is the best and wisest. A few moments of quiet, captured upon rising or retiring, as we take a walk during our coffee break or when we find ourselves alone in the kitchen with the dishes—these are powerful beginnings. In these moments of space, cleared from our activity, we can bend our thoughts toward God, perhaps doing nothing more than acknowledging—without self-recrimination—that we regret God's frequent absence from our conscious life. Perhaps we can repeat the historic prayer: "Lord, have mercy." Creating this space can signal to the Holy Spirit that we are open to God; it may even help us see that God is already there in our experience, waiting for us to see and accept love and grace.

Such intention, patiently accepted and activated can and will lead to other healthful spiritual practices suited to our needs and disposition. We may experiment with lectio divina (divine reading), an approach to Bible reading that blends reading, prayer, meditation and silence. Another option is to journal our prayers and, when we have finished writing, sit in silence to hear—and perhaps even record—what the Holy Spirit says to us in response. A half hour spent Saturday evening or earlier Sunday morning praying for the coming worship service and meditating on the sermon text, if it is known, can renew our experience of worship. Taking the risk of meeting with a spiritual director can open our eyes to God's presence in our experience and enhance our awareness of how we respond to that Presence. Books such as Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*, Dallas Willard's *The Spirit of the Disciplines* or Marjorie Thompson's *Soul Feast* (all contemporary Protestant writers on Christian spirituality) can encourage us with the many options before us in addressing our spiritual hunger.

Creating this space can signal to the Holy Spirit that we are open to God; it may even help us see that God is already there in our experience, waiting for us to see and accept love and grace.

No two spiritual pathways are alike, but each of our pathways opens before us as we clear space in our daily life—space for attention to God and to the connecting such attention brings to our awareness of God and others around us.

Gerry Ediger is an associate professor of Christian history at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. He also teaches courses in Christian spirituality.

4 in a series of six

Holistic Stewardship

The stewardship of relationships

Escaping the islands

by Roy E. Bronkema

Community should come to mean more to us than just an hour on Sunday morning. It ought to be cultivated in the larger context of shared meals, small groups and solid friendships.

A British publication once offered a prize for the best definition of a friend. The winning definition read, "A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out."

C.S. Lewis made an astute comment on the origins of friendship: "Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, 'What! You, too? I thought I was the only one.'"

Life lacks hope without meaningful relationships. And without significant friends to draw out their best, many never reach the maximum potential of their strength and influence. Mary Carolyn Davis put it best in her verse, entitled "Three": "Three men, together riding, Can win new worlds at their will; Resolute, ne'er dividing, Lead, and be victors still. Three can laugh and doom a king, Three can make the planets sing."

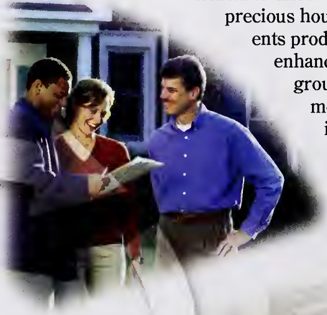
But amid our daily schedules, it can be easy to forget—or even ignore—the important relationships in our lives, whether they are friends and family or church members and neighbors. For example, many may receive great satisfaction from their work. But labor does not provide the most essential purpose and joy in our lives. You will rarely hear of someone on their deathbed who bemoans the lack of time spent at work, but people often express regret for time not spent in relationship.

Few people consider relationships something to be stewarded. But strong relationships should be cultivated as an essential part of a holistic life. Meaningful connections multiply our options, output and outreach. Close relationships bring good spiritual accountability, emotional stability and a sense of belonging—all elements critical to effectiveness. We conserve time because we are not wasting precious hours resolving conflict; relationships help us use our talents productively because multiple gifts can complement and enhance each other (as in an orchestra, for example). And groups who pool financial resources in relationship get more done with less money—there is power in combining financial influence.

Conversely, poor relationships can limit our usefulness in other stewardship areas. The Carnegie Technological Institute has stated that 90 percent of all people who fail in their life's vocation fail because they cannot get along with people. Health crises are statistically harder and longer when faced alone, most ministry efforts have limited success when they are solitary endeavors, and finances are not maximized without effective counsel from others. Relational conflict or crisis adds stress to ministry efforts; it is a distraction from fully investing with our time, talent, health or finances. Poor relationships adversely affect all other stewardship areas to a significant degree.

How then can we invest in this area prudently and ensure that we are wise stewards of our important interactions?

First, we should understand our need for relationship. In this era of independent churches, entrepreneurial businesses and individualism, we should grasp



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# of isolation

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that God meant for us to live in connection. We are told in Scripture to put into practice the "one another's" of the New Testament: love one another, pray for one another, be kind to one another. Community should come to mean more to us than just an hour on Sunday morning. It ought to be cultivated in the larger context of shared meals, small groups and solid friendships. We are not whole, independent, self-sufficient, super-capable and all-powerful. We need others, and they need us.

One night, 3-year-old Laurie requested her mother's aid in getting undressed. "You know how to undress yourself," the young mother reminded her. "Yes," Laurie said, "but sometimes people need people anyway, even if they know how to do things by themselves."

Second, we should make our most significant relationships a priority. When relationships are not fostered, they will tend toward entropy. Therefore we must begin to make decisions that put people before production—understanding that this strategy will lead to a long-term validation of our ministry, not it's undermining. We should choose God first—"Love the Lord your God with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:5)—family second—"Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18)—and ministry third.

Finally, we should cultivate relational openness, getting under the surface to what is authentic. Many people struggle needlessly with sin because they are respectable with others but not real. Sin by its very nature isolates and divides. Sheep that stray or are cut off from the rest of the flock are easily picked off and devoured. Only when we bring our sins and struggles into the light with fellow believers will we find the freedom to conquer those sins. The Bible says, "Confess your sins to one another ... that you may be healed" (James 5:16). Someone once wisely said long ago, "The closeness of your relationships is directly proportional to the degree to which you have revealed the truth about yourself." It is still true today.

Churches can help create this culture of relational vulnerability by making opportunities for members to connect on a deeper level: initiating small groups, facilitating relational seminars, encouraging ministry in pairs, developing systems of accountability and designing opportunities for older church members to mentor younger believers. We must create connection activities that give people a chance to develop spiritually nurturing relationships. In doing so, we become less like a bag of marbles, independently bouncing off each other, and more like a bag of grapes, involved and intertwined in each other's lives to everyone's spiritual benefit.

Only when we bring our sins and struggles into the light with fellow believers will we find the freedom to conquer those sins.

In the spring of 1994, Mr. Alter's fifth grade class at Lake Elementary School in Oceanside, Calif., included 14 boys who had no hair. Only one, however, had no choice in the matter.

Ian O'Gorman, undergoing chemotherapy for lymphoma, faced the prospect of having his hair fall out, so he had his head shaved. Then 13 of his classmates decided to shave their heads also. Ten-year-old Kyle Hanslik started it all. He talked to some other boys, and before long they all trekked to the barber shop. "The last thing he would want is to not fit in," said Kyle. "We just wanted to make him feel better."

Only God will be able to calculate the eternal impact made in our world when we make friendship and fellowship a successful stewardship goal.

Roy E. Bronkema is a free-lance writer specializing in work for churches and Christian organizations. Roy and Nancy, his wife, reside in Niles, Mich. Next month's article will explore the holistic stewardship of talent.

It takes a village to support a CO

Sylvia Klauser is pastor of Mennonite Church Stuttgart in Germany.

When Dave Stutzman began his assignment as coordinator of the Military Counseling Network in Bammental, Germany, his wildest dreams were only a tame reflection of things to come. On assignment with Mennonite Mission Network, Dave works with American soldiers interested in leaving the service on account of their conviction that military service is no longer what they want. All former conscientious objectors may want to pitch in with their experience and learn more about supporting a CO through trying times of getting an honorable discharge from the U.S. military as a CO.

The Military Counseling Network is a project of the German Mennonite Peace Committee (DMFK) and supported by MCC and Mission Network. During the first Gulf War, MCN was active in supporting American soldiers who were stationed in Germany on their way to and from Iraq. The second Iraq war prompted DMFK to decide that it was time to rouse MCN from slumber and begin counseling members of the U.S. military again. The MCN project is in its third year, and Dave has worked with more than 30 COs. The military has not approved CO claims for those caught up in direct participation in war. But there has been some success. Sgt. Deshawn Reed received a discharge as a CO last summer, joining a handful of others who have seen CO status recognized. MCN is working with nine COs awaiting final determination. MCN is also supporting a CO appealing his CO discharge disapproval to a federal court.

Much of Dave's work takes place over the phone, with email and in meetings with soldiers, and he works with other peace and antiwar groups in Germany. The key goal is drumming up support for soldiers, not only financially but emotionally, verbally and, most of all, spiritually.

Last year we began a support group for spouses and girlfriends of soldiers seeking CO status. At our meetings we listened to stories of fear and abandonment, resentment against the Army, exclusion and brainwashing. The wives, girlfriends and children of soldiers who seek CO status become Army citizens of a second class. Their patriotism is questioned, irregular participation in Army support activities is frowned upon, and personal friendships with other soldiers' wives or children are scarce. How can a family survive their father or mother's service in Iraq without support? How can children go to school knowing their friends have turned against them? How can a soldier's wife hear about suicide bombers in Iraq, knowing her husband is the front-line medic?

MCN volunteers in Germany need North American Mennonites and former COs to phone, email, pray for or send a check in support of those COs who struggle now with their decision to leave the Army for reasons of conscience. The contribution of the PAX boys in the 1950s and 1960s in Germany and those in Civilian Public Service through World War II is only the tip of the iceberg of an enormous Anabaptist peace witness.

Back then there was a draft, and COs chose not to take part in war by not joining. But the soldiers with whom we work are not really volunteers either. Many signed up with the military because of socioeconomic or educational opportunities, a way out of a hopeless situation. The prospects of education or the signing bonus in the bank was much more prevalent in their minds than the reality of an actual war. But fitting bits of body parts in body bags in Baghdad or raiding innocent Iraqis' houses in the dead of night reorganizes many soldiers' priorities. Their conscience objects to the daily killings.

Dave and other MCN volunteers welcome support. They hope to establish contact with COs today for emotional and spiritual support. A newsletter, *Sound Off*, is available on request.

MCN is on the frontline of peace and justice work. We have taken a stance against war by supporting those confronted by war. MCN is only a small office with limited resources. The global Anabaptist village can do much to help support today's cause for conscientious objection.

For more information, contact MCN at www.mc-network.de, mcn@dmfk.de, dave@mc-network.de or pastorin@mennoniten-stuttgart.de. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Katrina and faith in action**—Rosella Wiens Regier and Harold Regier
- **The parable of the traveling CEO**—Jane Yoder-Short
- **Listening to the Spirit**—Barry C. Bartel

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Mennonite World Conference gathering

More than 220 attend mini-assembly held March 9-15 in Pasadena, Calif.

Encouragement for those who endure persecution. The first official summary of beliefs shared by Anabaptists around the world. An African woman's plea for equality with men. Setting a goal to do peace work with Catholics.

These were among the highlights when about 220 Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from 50 countries gathered March 9-15 to nurture the global Anabaptist movement.

They came for the Mennonite World Conference General Council, a meeting held once every three years to foster unity and cooperation among more than a million Anabaptist members worldwide.

"When the global church gathers, we rejoice and we mourn," said Larry Miller of France, MWC executive secretary, at a March 12 worship service at William Carey International University. Participants from the Los Angeles area's ethnically diverse Anabaptist churches swelled the crowd to about 600.

Reasons to rejoice included the testimony of Vietnamese leader Hien Tri Truong, who told of Mennonites' perseverance amid religious repression and the release of six imprisoned church members—the last on March 2 after two years in jail (see page 7).

"Although at times it seemed the church would be scattered, through the grace and mercy of God the church stands firm," Truong said.

Mourning followed word of the death of Christian Peacemaker Teams worker Tom Fox, whose body was found in Iraq on March 9. MWC member churches in North America are among CPT's staunchest supporters (see "CPT Worker Tom Fox Found Killed in Iraq," March 21).

Fox, a Quaker, was the first to lose his life to violence in CPT's 20-year history. His death was "a reminder of the costliness of following the gospel of peace," said Jeff Wright, a conference minister for Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference, at the March 12 worship service.

Encouragement for persecuted believers continued the next day with prayer for Bishop Lesly Bertrand and the Grace Assembly Network of churches he leads in Haiti. Bertrand told of his escape from death Feb. 18 when 12 armed bandits opened fire in a church in Croix-des-Bouquets, killing one worshiper and wounding four. He described the attack as politically motivated.

Bertrand's network of 27 congregations has formed a partnership with Franconia Conference of Mennonite Church USA. He plans to apply for Grace Assembly to become one of MWC's member conferences.

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Everett J. Thomas

Members of Mennonite Church USA's Los Angeles Faith Chapel lead worship on March 12 during MWC's mini-assembly in Pasadena, Calif. In front of them are 15 empty chairs with the names of MWC General Council members denied visas by the U.S. State Department.

General Council delegates prayed for Truong and Bertrand and the Vietnamese and Haitian believers they represent—two examples of MWC efforts to support churches that endure suffering.

Agree on "shared convictions"

In a historic action, the council approved a statement of shared convictions to give members around the world a clearer picture of beliefs they hold in common. The document's seven points describe basic beliefs shared with most Christians, such as salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as beliefs Anabaptists especially emphasize—such as nonviolence.

It is the first statement of beliefs adopted by leaders of the worldwide Anabaptist community. It does not replace conferences' official confessions of faith. But it could be especially useful for those that do not have a formal confession, council members said. It also is intended to help define Anabaptism to others.

The first draft was written at the MWC assembly in Zimbabwe in 2003. Revisions were made based on responses received from member churches over the past three years. The statement of shared convictions will be online in English at

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Mennonite World Conference gathering

Council considers ecumenical relations, peace witness, women theologians

Everett J. Thomas

Gay Brunt Miller (left) of Franconia Mennonite Conference hosted Haiti bishop Lesly Bertrand (center) who told of his escape from death Feb. 18, when 12 armed bandits opened fire in a church in Croix-des-Bouquets, killing one worshiper and wounding four. Joining Miller in prayer for the church in Haiti are MWC leaders (left to right), Larry Miller, Danisa Ndlovu and Nancy Heisey.

www.mwc-cmm.org, with Spanish and French translations coming later.

Relating to Catholics

After a five-year series of dialogue meetings between MWC representatives and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the General Council endorsed several new initiatives with the Catholic Church.

One goal is to start joint peacemaking efforts. If the Catholic Church is receptive to the idea, Anabaptists and Catholics would propose "a concrete plan of action for a specific situation of conflict that would demonstrate the existence of viable and practical alternatives to military action."

Preferably, this would happen in a place where violence affects both Anabaptists and Catholics, such as Congo or Colombia.

Also, in 2007, MWC will organize a delegation to visit Rome, at the invitation of the Pontifical Council. Then, in 2008 and '09, MWC and the Pontifical Council would organize two consultations "in regions of the world where Mennonites and Catholics encounter each other in significant and perhaps problematic ways."

Strengthening peace witness

The 100-member General Council functions in two other forms, as the Peace Council and the Faith and Life Council. During Peace Council sessions, members discussed how to strengthen their churches' peace witness and beliefs.

Peter Stucky of Colombia proposed three commitments, which council members approved:

- To make our churches "sanctuaries of peace, [which] … impacts our message, our space and our people."
- To follow "the way of nonviolence as a non-negotiable value."
- To "stand against the taking of all human life."

The Peace Council listening committee observed that "fear is a serious obstacle to developing a culture of peace." In some countries, peacemakers fear for their physical safety. In other countries, "we may fear what other people think of us."

Delegates approved designating the Sunday closest to Sept. 21 as Peace Sunday, to be observed in MWC member churches. Churches that already observe Peace Sunday on a different day are encouraged to continue that observance. Sept. 21 was selected because it is the United Nations' World Day of Peace.

Women theologians

Among those who told of experiences in their home countries, Rebecca Osiro of Kenya gave a

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Everett J. Thomas

Give me an S

AMIGOS members Amandus Reimer and Sarah Thompson loosen up Mennonite World Conference general council members by having them spell out their acronym. AMIGOS is MWC's youth committee. Reimer represents Latin America. Thompson represents North America.

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Spring 2006
Volume 16 Issue 2

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Panorama

What are we learning?

When congregations, conferences and other groups in the church call on AMBS faculty members to preach and teach, the benefit is two-fold: professors learn what issues and experiences are important to others in the church, and the groups learn from the professors. Here are reflections on what three faculty members have learned in recent speaking engagements.

***Lois Barrett**, Ph.D., assistant professor of theology and Anabaptist studies; director, AMBS–Great Plains*

People in our churches are hungry to consider profound theological issues. But they want to talk about these issues in language they can understand. I've learned that it helps to use images, metaphors, and examples. I don't consider this as diluting the truth. In fact, many times we can describe our deepest spiritual experiences only in metaphors—direct description just isn't possible.

The place for doing theology is not just in seminaries, but also in congregations. Theology must remain faithful to the gospel and, at the same time, be context-specific. So congregations are excellent locations for doing theology. Congregations will do theology when they:

- Feel they have permission to do so.
- Are equipped.
- Realize that, because theology must consider the context and the context is often changing, theology is never finished.

Ben C. Ollenburger, Ph.D., professor of biblical theology

The Bible continues to engage congregations and their pastors, and they respond to the gospel. This has been my impression, and a great encouragement, teaching Bible studies, preaching revival sermons, and leading workshops.

At the same time, we face challenges—good ones, I believe. We confront something of a divide between members of our congregations who both retain a store of "biblical knowledge" and a deeply ingrained sense of Scripture's authority, truth, and efficacy, on one hand, and…those who don't. Regardless of this divide, we have been known, as a seminary and as a church, for our peace witness and our "ethical" reading of Scripture. In this we have borne good witness. Among our challenges is to root our witness firmly in Scripture and in the gospel, which we must not reduce to ethics. Christian obedience—Christian worship in every dimension—is a response to God's grace, attested in the election of Israel and at great cost in Jesus Christ.

Gayle Gerber Koontz, Ph.D., professor of theology and ethics

I was both sobered and encouraged while interacting with Mennonites and other Christians in

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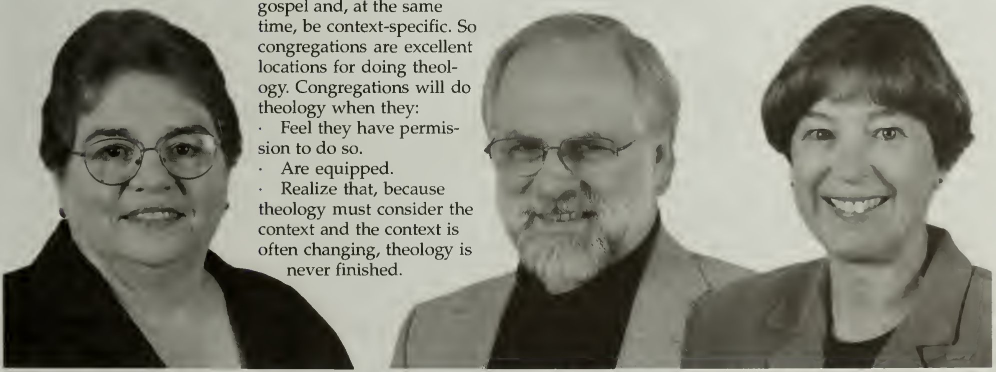


Steve Echols

Fostering collaboration and communication

"Transform seminary-church connections through sustained interaction between professors and pastors."

This goal is at the heart of a new program initiated by AMBS in 2005. **Engaging Pastors includes ten projects** which will give seminary professors and pastors opportunities to collaborate in a variety of ways. Engaging Pastors will continue for a five-year period with the intent that through it, both the seminary and the church will be strengthened.

One component which will bring professors into congregations is the **Listening Project**. Any congregation whose pastor is a graduate of AMBS from the last ten years may request a visit from an AMBS professor. The goal is for the faculty member to listen and take the learnings back to the seminary where they will help to shape the curriculum that prepares future pastors.

Clarifying the Call is a program for new pastors—pastors who completed seminary study in the last five years and who are in their first assignment. During a weekend on the AMBS campus, these pastors can reflect on their ministry and get support. Leaders for the event are staff from the Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada ministerial offices and AMBS professors.

Another program is **Seminario Bíblico Anabautista**, a Spanish-language ministry program in Dallas, Texas. Designed collaboratively by Mennonite Hispanic pastors and AMBS faculty, this program brings seminary resources to pastors and congregations who often are not able to participate in the seminary.

Already, as a result of the first offering of several Engaging Pastors programs, faculty are reevaluating the way they teach some courses or are getting affirmation for the ways they bring ministry and scholarship together in their classes.

For a complete list and descriptions of Engaging Pastors programs, see the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep_index.php. Several programs have spring deadlines for pastors and congregations to apply, so explore the web pages carefully if you are interested in participating. ●

Mary E. Klassen

Arthur Paul Boers (right), AMBS professor, led a discussion on pastoral imagination during the weekend event, Clarifying the Call, designed specifically for new pastors. Participants were Pieter Niemeyer (left), Stouffville, Ont; Amy Nissley (second from left), Mountain Lake, Minn.; and (not pictured) Allan Friesen, Rosthern, Sask.; Dick Barrett, West Liberty, Ohio; Rod Miller, Plain City, Ohio; and Tim Kuepfer, Richmond, B.C. The event is an opportunity for pastors to reflect on their experiences and gain new insights for their ministry.

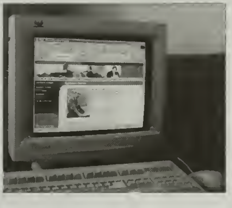
Mark Shephard

The Pastor-Faculty Colloquies take professors and pastors to a retreat setting for three sessions, each lasting two days. Together the participants focus on issues of leadership in the church. The 2005-2006 Colloquy included (left to right) Arthur Paul Boers, AMBS professor; David Wood, facilitator; Carolyn and Keith Collins, pastors of the Church of the Overcomer, Trainer, Pa.; and Rebecca Slough, AMBS professor. Other members were Samuel Lopez, Lancaster Mennonite Conference, Lancaster, Pa.; Mag Richer Smith and Bob Smith, First Mennonite Church, Iowa City, Iowa; Doug Luginbill, Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan.; and Jacob Elias, AMBS professor. The 2006–2007 Colloquy will explore teaching the Bible in congregations. See more: www.ambs.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep_news_colloquies_theme.php

Invite a professor to speak to your group

Rediscovering Sabbath … Psalms … What do we believe about the Lord's supper … Toward a gospel of peace for the 21st century … Ministry and leadership in the New Testament.

Sermons, workshops and discussions on these topics and many more are offered by AMBS professors and staff through the seminary's Speakers Bureau. Any group—congregation, conference, Sunday school class, retreat center—may invite a speaker to preach, present a workshop or lead a discussion.



Newly established, this effort to link seminary resources with church groups is spelled out in the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu/SpeakersBureau.

On the web pages you will find all the needed information:

- a list of topics and presenters
- contact information
- financial expectations
- print-quality photos of speakers for use in the group's publicity

Also, "Faculty on the road" web pages report where faculty and administrators are already scheduled to speak. If you can link your group's request with that of another group in your area, you may save on travel costs for the speaker. See www.ambs.edu/php/speakersbureau/sb_faculty_travel.php for this information.

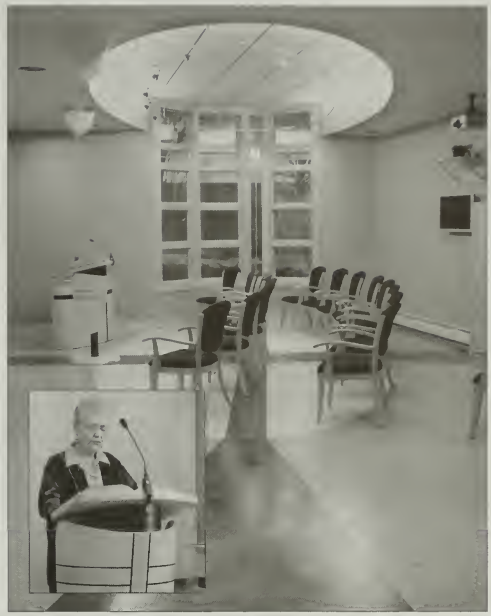
If you have any questions, you may contact the Church Leadership Center at AMBS, ChurchLeadership@ambs.edu. ●

What are we learning?

(Continued from page 1)

Gayle Gerber Koontz, Ph.D.,

Manitoba this past semester. I was sobered by the profound pain many in our communities carry because of mental illnesses in our families—and the often inadequate response of congregations. Grief was palpable in groups where families had lost children in death by suicide, where the stress of illness had broken relationships, and where the silence of the church was deafening. I was encouraged by the perceptiveness and creative responses to this reality of MCC Canada, local volunteers and a number of health service providers and pastors I spoke with. I left with a deeper sense of call to develop aspects of my theological reflection and teaching ministry that can speak with spiritual depth and integrity to those who live with chronic illnesses in the family. ●



Mary E Klassen

Sharon Baker (inset photo), full-time volunteer at AMBS since 2002, was the first reader during three days of reading the Bible in the seminary's new Chapel of the Word. The March 3 dedication service for the small chapel was preceeded by three days of Bible reading from its pulpit.

The worship-like space and the small size make the Chapel of the Word ideal for classes in which students learn how to preach, to lead worship and singing and to conduct rituals such as communion and baptism. It is equipped with state-of-the-art technology so students can learn how to use technology in worship and so they can learn from video recordings of themselves in leadership roles.

Funded through the Next Generation campaign, this project extended a classroom into the quadrangle at the center of campus. Major donors were Peter and Helen Redekop and Peter and Charlotte Wall of British Columbia.

Campaign Report

next Generation
AMBS Fund for Church Leadership

The current emphasis in the Next Generation campaign is to complete funding for the new AMBS library and campus center. To find out more, see **www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.**

	Goal	Received (US dollars) 2.28.06
Library and campus center	8,000,000	$6,100,000

President's Window

Important as seminaries may be, congregations are the primary setting for theological education. Pastors, Sunday School teachers and caregivers serve as theological educators every week through word and action. Weddings, funerals and life passage events generate deep questions: What really matters in life? Can I know God? What happens when I die?

When I started seminary twenty-six years ago, I declared I was going to be an academic, not a pastor. I thought being a pastor was too modest a goal. But a required pastoral internship threw me into the deep end of life's most persistent questions. I had deathbed conversations with a cancer patient the same week my daughter was born. Spiritual mysteries of life, from womb to tomb, utterly engaged my imagination.

When I answered a call to pastoral leadership, a friend lamented that I would "waste" my abilities in such a mundane role. What a misunderstanding of pastoral leadership!

I have the "terminal" degree in New Testament studies, have taught and published, and now have been president of a seminary for ten years. But my primary identity remains that of pastor. The biggest and most interesting challenge I can imagine is helping individuals and congregations deal daily with the joys, doubts and fears of real life.

If most theological education happens in the congregation, how do pastors and other congregational leaders gain depth of knowledge and experience to educate others? It is impossible to provide everything such leaders need in two or three years of seminary study. But if seminary faculty themselves are immersed in the life and mission of the church, they will help a new generation of congregation-based educators develop a life-long pattern of tapping into a vast reservoir of biblical and theological insight—and using that to nurture the people of God.

— J. Nelson Kraybill

Alumni News

Wendy Janzen (Master of Divinity 2002) was ordained on Feb. 19, 2006, at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Theo Odhiambo (Master of Art: Theological Studies 2002) was ordained Jan. 29, by the Tanzania Mennonite Church.

Fourteen AMBS alumni are writers in the 2005–2008 cycle of the Uniform Series study guides and teacher guides: **Wilma Bailey, Leonard Beechy, James R. Engle, Willmar T. Harder, Sheila Klassen-Wiebe, David M. Morrow, Linda Gehman Peachey, Raymond H. Reimer, Dale E. Shenk, Sue C. Steiner, Anne Stuckey, Don Unger, Duane Yoder, Elizabeth Yoder. Perry B. Yoder,** professor emeritus, also is a writer.

Panorama

New book by Jacob Elias

Remember the Future: The Pastoral Theology of Paul the Apostle, by Jacob W. Elias, was released by Herald Press in February. Jake is AMBS professor of New Testament and is co-pastor, with Lillian, his wife, of Parkview Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind.

Gound-blessing for AMBS library and campus center

A ground-blessing service is planned for the seminary's new library and campus center on April 21. This project is the major component of the Next Generation Fund for Church Leadership (see page 3). AMBS still seeks contributions to complete funding for the project. For more information, see www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.

Consultation set for Confession of Faith

How well has *Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective* served the church over the last ten years? That question is the focus of a three-day consultation at AMBS, June 8–10. Leaders and scholars in the church will gather to reflect on the impact of this confession on the church and its members. See more at www.ambs.edu/php/ims/ims_confession_consultation.php.

Pastors Week 2007

Rodney Clapp, author, speaker and editor, will be the featured presenter at Pastors Week 2007, January 22–25. His recent books are *Tortured Wonders: Christian Spirituality for People, Not Angels* and *Peculiar People: the Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society.*

Spring 2006
Volume 16 Issue 2

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

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calmly stated but passionately worded call for the acceptance of women as equals with men in African churches. Representing the African Mennonite Women Theologians group, Osiro called for removing barriers that reserve pastoral roles for men and that prevent women from using all their gifts in ministry.

"We are ready to be by your side as co-workers in the field," she said. "Even in abject disillusionment, we have hands by which Jesus can lift us up."

Osiro praised the Mennonite Brethren in Congo for ordaining a woman, Kadi Halumaye, in 2004, and said she hoped more ordinations of women would follow.

Anabaptism and Pentecostalism

The council identified the relationship between Anabaptism and Pentecostalism as an issue for continuing work by MWC leaders. After an evening symposium on "Anabaptism and Pentecostalism: Creating Understanding," several participants affirmed the Pentecostal influence on their churches. But others said the impact was not always positive. Pentecostalism emphasizes the the Holy Spirit's power to transform a believer's life and is associated with charismatic forms of worship.

"I would guess that at least half the grassroots members of Mennonite World Conference would consider themselves to be Pentecostals," said Richard Showalter, president of Eastern Mennonite Missions, the mission agency of Lancaster Mennonite Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Showalter described himself as a Pentecostal Mennonite, as did Elina Ciptadi of Indonesia, who said she likes to move and shout when she worships.

"Mennonite is a lifestyle that is open to any manifestation of God at work," she said. "I have never seen in Mennonite teaching that we only worship a certain way."

Showalter said the 16th-century Anabaptists were Pentecostal, and modern Pentecostal Mennonites are reclaiming their own heritage.

Paul Zehr, a Lancaster Conference bishop, said Pentecostalism had brought divisive influences to the conference as well. Matiku Thomas Nyitambe of Tanzania said "a spirit of splitting up has entered our churches" as a result of Pentecostalism. A findings committee concluded that Anabaptists and Pentecostals need to learn from each other. A committee statement said both are restorationist movements based on Acts 2, and both are considered radical alternatives to mainstream culture.

Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite World Conference's mini-assembly was held on the campus of William Carey International University in Pasadena, Calif. On March 9, participants enjoyed an outdoor barbecue.

Preparing for Paraguay

Paraguayan representatives encouraged council members to promote attendance at the next MWC assembly in Paraguay in July 2009.

"The presence of the global Anabaptist family will have a favorable impact on the country and also a positive influence on our churches," said Alfred Neufeld Friesen of Paraguay. Also, the council:

- Approved a program plan for 2006-09 that includes a goal to "shift a significant part of MWC's administrative capacity to the global South" by opening a regional office in Africa or Asia.

"We think it is imperative that MWC not have all its offices in the global North," Miller said. MWC currently has offices in Strasbourg, France; Kitchener, Ont.; and Fresno, Calif.

- Heard that the second volume of the Global Mennonite History Project, the book on Europe, will be published in June. The Africa volume came out in 2003.
- Accepted the 565-member Nepal Brethren in Christ Church Society as a full member of MWC.
- Elected Danisa Ndlovu of Zimbabwe as MWC president-elect. He currently serves as vice president and will succeed Nancy Heisey of the United States as president in 2009.
- Appointed Larry Miller to another three-year term as executive secretary, from 2009 to 2012.

—Paul Schrag for Meetinghouse, a consortium of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors

Universities remember CPTer Tom Fox

U.S. military forces find his body in Iraq March 9; he was bound and shot.

Jim Bishop

Pray
for Peace
Act
for Peace

Lisa Schirch, who had Tom Fox in her "strategic nonviolence" class at Eastern Mennonite University, reads from Fox's journal entries while photos of the slain CPT worker are projected on a screen.

The body of a kidnapped Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) activist was recovered by U.S. forces in Iraq on March 9. Fox, a Quaker from Clearbrook, Va., was found by Iraqi police with his hands bound and with gunshot wounds to the head and chest.

News of the death of Tom Fox, 54, a CPT worker held hostage in Iraq, dealt a difficult blow to those who knew him at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. Fox had studied one semester in EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding graduate program before going to Iraq as a CPT peace worker. He was kidnapped in Baghdad last Nov. 26 along with fellow CPTers Norman Kember, 74, a Briton, and Canadians James Loney, 41, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32 (see page 23).

Lisa Schirch, associate professor of conflict studies in EMU's Center for Justice and Peacemaking, had Fox in her "strategic nonviolence" course at EMU.

"May we all hold every human being in Iraq in our prayers as the trauma, anger, fear and sadness rages on and on," Schirch said at a March 15 memorial service, "and may we all find a way to renew our own personal efforts to transform those energies into something more positive."

Ruth Zimmerman, co-director of EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, said that "we all have a responsibility to break the cycle of violence and vengeance that has caused the deaths of tens of thousands in Iraq, including Tom Fox.

"The answer is not more violence, more vengeance," Zimmerman said. "The answer is more people with the courage and faith of Tom Fox to stand up and say, 'Love, forgiveness and restorative justice are the answers, not violent retribution.'"

Fox is the first to be killed in "the line of duty" of the 2,000 peace workers which received training through EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, but many others have been threatened and some have been beaten, said Zimmerman.

EMU alumni had been following Fox's fate with close attention and much prayer. Zimmerman said she is "especially proud of EMU's Muslim alumni and visiting professors who have bravely spoken on behalf of the hostages."

Khadija Ossoble Ali, a Somali Muslim who earned a master's degree in conflict transformation at EMU in 2000, responded to the news of Fox's death with this emailed comment to her fellow alumni: "He was the hope for a better future for all of us who have been kept hostage by a small minority in the name of religion."

EMU held prayer vigils for the four kidnapped CPT workers on campus Nov. 30, 2005, and Jan. 30. Fox was scheduled to speak at EMU in February this year.—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University. Bonnie Price Lofton contributed to this report.*

Bluffton (Ohio) University junior Sipsem Maldonado lights a candle during a March 15 memorial service for fallen peace activist, Tom Fox.

Courtesy photo

CPT workers freed by U.S. forces in Iraq

CPT leaders express gratitude that rescuers fired no shots to free colleagues.

On March 23, Christian Peacemaker Teams members Norman Kember, Jim Loney and Harmeet Sooden were freed after four months in captivity in Iraq. CPT leaders in Baghdad met with them immediately after their release and again on March 24.

The team found the men to be well, alert and in good spirits. The men asked many questions about their families, friends and colleagues at home and in Iraq. They also began to tell some parts of the story of their captivity—of efforts to stay physically fit, of periodic separations and reunions, of receiving a Christmas cake.

Learning about the death of Tom Fox (see page 22) after their release was a particular burden. They said Fox had taken leadership in encouraging the group right from the beginning of their captivity. They have not yet shared with CPT any details about their captors or the events that led to their freedom.

In a statement released to the Baghdad media March 24, they wrote, "We are deeply grateful to all those who worked and prayed for our release. We have no words to describe our feelings of great joy at being free again. Our heads are swirling, and when we are ready we will talk to the media."

"The rest of us in CPT are also grateful to all those who worked nonviolently," said a statement posted on CPT's Web site March 27, "and who prayed fervently for their release—religious leaders and soldiers, teammates and government officials, partner organizations, friends, family, children, women and men all over the world. We are particularly grateful that no one was injured in this rescue operation."

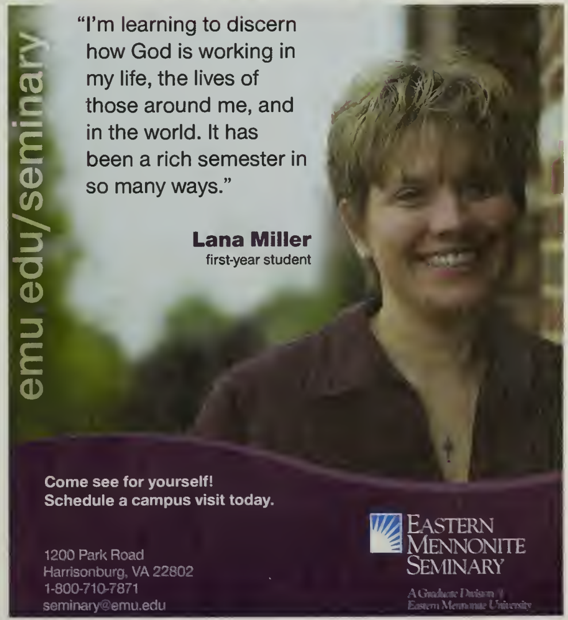
CPT also said that in order not to cause Fox's family further pain, and for the sake of accuracy, CPT urges that the media and everyone concerned refrain from repeating the rumor that Fox was tortured. Two CPT workers, Carol Rose and Rich Meyer, viewed Fox's body and did not see signs of torture.

"We also have reports from two additional independent sources," said the Web site statement, "who examined the body more thoroughly. They also did not find evidence of torture. Until the final autopsy report is released, we ask everyone to withhold their judgment."

In an earlier statement on the CPT Web site, the organization expressed gratitude "to the soldiers who risked their lives to free Jim, Norman and Harmeet. As peacemakers who hold firm to our commitment to nonviolence, we are also deeply grateful that they fired no shots to free our colleagues."—*Christian Peacemaker Teams*

> **We are deeply grateful to all those who worked and prayed for our release.**—Harmeet Sooden, Norman Kember and James Loney

Freed Christian Peacemaker Teams member Harmeet Sooden (at left), Norman Kember (below left) at a demontration and James Loney (below). Photos are from CPT.



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Lana Miller
first-year student

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Authorities recognize Vietnam church

One Mennonite congregation is accepted by Ho Chi Minh City officials.

The Ho Chi Minh City Committee for Religious Affairs has recognized one of the Mennonite congregations in the city. In a document signed March 6, the head of the committee, Nguyen Ngoc San, said the committee was approving the request for registration of religious activities of the Vietnam Mennonite Church represented by Nguyen Quang Trung.

This represents a significant development in a process begun by Trung in the mid-1980s. The earlier Mennonite church property was appropriated by the local government in 1976, so Trung's home in Binh Thanh district is designated the temporary headquarters of the church. A nearby rented property where the congregation meets is also designated as the temporary place of meeting.

Reports indicate that a prominent Baptist congregation in Ho Chi Minh City and some Adventist congregations were also recognized at the same time.

Trung, president of the Vietnam Mennonite Church, and leaders of the Baptist and Adventist groups were contacted by the Religious Affairs Committee in August 2004 and invited to submit documents in preparation for registration.

Trung was committed to do this, but many members of the Mennonite church administrative committee objected to his conversation with government officials at a time when six Mennonite leaders were imprisoned and awaiting trial.

After action was taken to remove Trung from church leadership, he formed a separate church administrative committee and continued the process.

Several months later, Mrs. Le Thi Phu Dung, wife of imprisoned pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, also contacted the city's religious affairs personnel to pursue registration for the Mennonite congregation in Ho Chi Minh City's District 2. This congregation is not recognized in the recent government order. It is reported that Trung was told that the District 2 congregation could not be included because of its stance with the authorities.

The District 2 congregation was repeatedly harassed by local authorities following the arrest of the six leaders in a 2004 incident (see related story on page 7). Since Pastor Quang was released from prison in amnesty last August, harassment has lessened. Attendance at their Sunday evening worship services is now approaching the same numbers as before the incident, and leadership training sessions are taking place.

Recognition by the Ho Chi Minh City government officials of the Binh Thanh congregation applies only to the city. Trung reported that the city officials promised they would inform officials in other areas of this action, so it may affect other places.

A government visit in January to the Binh Thanh church conveying official New Year's greetings was followed by a similar gesture by authorities to the Mennonite church in the Mekong Delta city of Can Tho.

The Mennonite church in the central Vietnam city of Hoi An also reports new freedom. One local ward has offered to sell land to construct a church building.

In a March 9 communication to Mennonite World Conference and other international Mennonite church bodies, Trung reported that the city's officials said they would guide the Mennonite, Baptist and Adventist churches in a process so the government's top Religious Affairs Committee would authorize national assemblies granting official legal status.

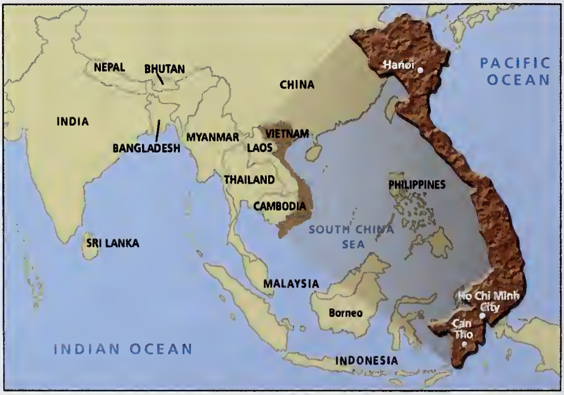
The large Evangelical Church of Vietnam in the south was granted legal status in 2001. Various congregations that were not recognized by the authorities at that time are being registered on a congregation-by-congregation basis.

Even though the Evangelical Church of Vietnam, both in the north and south, has legal status, the majority of evangelical Christians in Vietnam today are related to unregistered house churches. Many of these churches seek recognition.

Some Christian leaders, however, still prefer nonregistration, concerned that reporting activities to the local government and seeking permission for new branch churches would stifle church life.—*Mennonite World Conference release from Vietnamese Ministries*

Church split

There are currently 12,000 believers in Mennonite congregations in Vietnam. However, a June 2005 division within the Vietnamese Mennonite church continues. The precipitating issue was whether to comply with government procedures to receive recognition for Mennonite congregations. In a presentation to Mennonite World Conference General council on March 10, Ton Vinh Duc Choa Troi said, "We continue to pray that the two groups will come together." —*Everett J. Thomas*



MCC staff mark Iraq war anniversary

Administrator says war has displaced many Iraqis, left in legal limbo.

Three years have passed since the U.S. military forces invaded Iraq in March 2003. The volatile security situation prevents Mennonite Central Committee from placing workers in the country, but MCC continues to develop and support projects in Iraq, says MCC Iraq program coordinator Peter Dula.

"The war affects all our projects with interruptions, delays and long periods of inactivity, but none of them have completely shut down," says Dula, who manages the program from Amman, Jordan.

Working in partnership with Iraqi churches and nongovernment organizations, MCC provides humanitarian aid and supports programs that focus on education, health, vocational training, conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives.

Fighting between the multinational forces and various insurgent groups has created a large-scale, internal displacement of people, says Dula. MCC has responded by distributing nearly 4,000 relief kits to displaced families in various parts of Iraq, particularly in and around Fallujah.

MCC has also distributed 12,000 school kits to children from low-income families in Baghdad and provided emergency food assistance to low-income families from Iraq living temporarily in Jordan.

Examples of MCC's educational support include structural renovations to schools, construction and furnishing of libraries, literacy and vocational training and health-awareness workshops. MCC also supported renovations to a church building in northern Iraq that is used as a shelter for women and for sewing workshops.

While the U.S. government sees the nationwide referendum last October and the December 2005 election as signs of progress, personal security for most Iraqis continue to deteriorate, says Dula. Tension among the country's ethnic and religious groups, kidnappings of Iraqis by Iraqis for ransom and disruptions in basic services such as electricity and running water have resulted in MCC increasing its resources for conflict resolution and peace-building programs.

"People in Iraq yearn for stability," he says. "Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have left the country, with many of them in legal limbo in neighboring countries such as Syria and Jordan."

MCC peace-building initiatives in Iraq focus on teaching conflict resolution skills, strengthening the capacity of Iraqi organizations involved in conflict resolution and peace building and identifying ways to connect Iraqi peace builders with regional networks of peace builders.

MCC's work in Iraq also gives MCC staff a better understanding of life in Iraq, says Dula, who has written several articles on the impact of the war. The Catholic Press Association recently awarded Dula's article "The War in Iraq," published in the Dec. 3, 2005, issue of *Commonweal*, an honorable mention award.—*Gladys Terichow for Mennonite Central Committee*

Have we learned from our mistakes?

by J. Daryl Byler
March 17

The recent kidnapping and killing of Tom Fox, a Quaker working with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq, have refocused the eyes of the church on the volatile situation in Iraq.

"Almost three years after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraq is at serious risk of civil war and disintegration," writes Joost Hiltermann, an analyst with the International Crisis Group, in the *Baltimore Sun* (March 5).

Indeed, a recent poll shows that 80 percent of the U.S. public believes civil war in Iraq is likely. This is not the way it was supposed to be.

When President Bush spoke at the American Enterprise Institute less than a month before launching a war against Iraq in March 2003, he said that a U.S.-led military invasion would bring democracy to Iraq and would be the first step toward bringing peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well.

Three years later, Saddam Hussein is on trial and elections have been held. But Iraq is in shambles. Bombings kill dozens of Iraqis almost daily as sectarian violence is on the rise. By conservative estimates, between 33,600 and 37,750 Iraqi civilians have been killed since the war began. Electricity and oil production have yet to return to prewar levels.

More than 2,300 U.S. soldiers and another 200 coalition troops have died in Iraq since 2003. The United States has already spent nearly $250 billion for the war in Iraq. And Congress has given the green light to spend tens of billions more.

Congress initially earmarked $20 billion for rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure, but much of that amount has been rerouted for security. Many reconstruction projects will not be completed. The situation in Iraq is a powerful reminder that war does not create the space for democracy to flourish.

Even as Iraq crumbles, hostile rhetoric and ominous threats between the United States and Iran are on the rise. In mid-March, the Bush administration issued an updated version of its three-year-old "National Security Strategy of the United States," which set the framework for a preemptive war with Iraq.

Rather than admitting that the Iraq war was ill-conceived, the revised strategy reaffirms the U.S. right to take "anticipatory action" to defend itself against perceived threats. It also names Iran as the single greatest challenge to U.S. security. Meanwhile, the House [of Representative's] International Relations Committee voted 37-3 this week for a bill that would cut off economic aid to any country that invests in Iran's energy sector.

For its part, the Iranian government threatens to retaliate with harm if the United States harms Iran.

Peace and justice advocates do well to call upon U.S. policymakers to acknowledge the failure of war in Iraq and to recommit resources for rebuilding that devastated nation.

It is also a critical time for advocates to urge a more constructive course in the current standoff with Iran.

The only thing worse than making big mistakes is to repeat them.

J. Daryl Byler is director of the MCC Washington Office. This article first appeared on the Web site www.thirdway.com

Hertzler death brings Thai man new life

Parents of EMM worker killed in accident participate in the driver's baptism.

Nine months ago, Sompon, a rice farmer from northeastern Thailand, hit EMM worker John Hertzler with his truck, killing John instantly. Dazed and frightened, Sompon fled the scene of the accident, not wanting to face the police in his drunken state.

But on Jan. 29, Sompon stood with an open face, confessed his newfound faith in Christ, and received water baptism, surrounded by the monthly assembly of the Life Enrichment Churches—and John's parents, Truman and Ginny Hertzler.

Dairy farmers and self-taught historians from Elverson, Pa., the Hertzlers had traveled to Thailand, planning to teach Mennonite history, take soil samples, and walk through this significant chapter in their own grieving process.

On an earlier return visit by John's wife, Janelle, and sister-in-law Annette Hertzler, the Hertzler family had sent along a letter for Sompon, telling him that the family forgives him and is praying for him—but Truman and Ginny also hoped they'd be able to meet him.

"I sense that this visit will somehow be the cap sheaf of Johnny's life work," Truman told a prayer group from their home church, Hopewell Christian Fellowship in Elverson, Pa., before departing for Thailand. "I sense that God will do something new," Ginny added.

But no one could have orchestrated the events that led to this moment.

As Sompon stood, still dripping wet from his immersion, the Hertzlers went forward to welcome him. Ginny's eyes were brimming with tears as she sought out those of Sompon, who stood before her with his hands clasped and his head bowed.

"We rejoice with you today, and welcome you as a brother," Truman said.

"I was a mess—always drunk or high," Sompon said. "But I've been changed. I have a new life now."

"I understand how it is," Truman said. "When I was a young man, I struggled, too."

Since the accident that claimed John's life, pastor Joi, chair of the circle of Life Enrichment Churches, and other church leaders had met regularly with Sompon in his Buntharik village home. They had requested this arrangement as part of the legal settlement for the accident, and they were working their way through the Life Enrichment Courses the church uses to introduce Christian faith in this Buddhist setting.

There were Christian believers in surrounding communities but none in Buntharik. For months before his death, John and Janelle had been praying for a breakthrough in Buntharik. They had even considered relocating there. At his death, John's body came to rest about 55 meters inside the Buntharik district.

I've asked [Sompon's] wife and his neighbors, and they say he is a different person. He is relaxed, humble and honest; he is clearly able to express his newfound faith.
—Pastor Joi

Carol Tobin

Ginny Hertzler watches while her husband Truman ties a string of welcome and blessing around the wrist of Sompon, the man who drove the truck that struck and killed their son, John, last July.

Joi knew well the complexities and difficulties of Sompon's situation and did not rush quickly to this moment.

"I looked for real heart change," he said, "and that is what I am seeing. I've asked his wife and his neighbors, and they say he is a different person. He is relaxed, humble and honest; he is clearly able to express his newfound faith."

After the baptism there was a worship service and a fellowship meal—spread out on the floor in typical Isaan fashion. But no one left before the Isaan benediction—a string-tying ceremony.

The church clustered around Sompon, Truman and Ginny—tying strings of welcome and blessing on the arms of those whose lives have now been inextricably linked—now not with mere strings but with cords of great pain and costly forgiveness. Truman intentionally sought his opportunity to tie strings on Sompon's wrists.

As a tangible expression of her willingness to receive the string gestures of love and blessing from the group, Ginny extended her arms left and right—in cruciform.

Since John's death, the Hopewell Network of Churches, which includes the Hertzlers' home congregation, have adopted the Isaan people of Thailand and Laos for special ongoing prayer and ministry focus.

Other current EMM team members in Thailand include Lucille Zimmerman and a three-person Youth Evangelism Service team.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Ecuador church safe haven for refugees

Members of warring factions from Colombia end up in congregation together.

Linda Shelly

Liliana Ocampo (third from right) admires some of handcrafts made by María and her children in the Quito Mennonite Church's home for Colombian refugees. Ocampo tutored the children until they were able to find a place in a Quito school and helped them sew the three little stuffed dolls as part of a trauma healing exercise. The appliqué on the table was made by María as a gift for one of the congregations of the Central Plains Mennonite Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Luis* entered the Quito Mennonite Church burning with hatred, an anger fueled by armed combat in Colombia. That was before he crossed the border into Ecuador running to save his own life.

However, instead of finding a haven in the congregation, he encountered the enemy—members of the Rivera* family, also Colombian refugees but from a rival faction.

Living out Christ's peace in Ecuador can become dangerous, members of the five-year-old church discovered. This small congregation, led by three Colombian mission workers, provides a home for some of the Colombian refugees who flee into Ecuador to escape the violence of their motherland.

The Quito Mennonite Church is supported in its ministry through the Ecuador Partnership, a Mennonite Mission Network ministry that includes Iglesia Cristiana Menonita de Colombia (Colombian Mennonite Church) and the Central Plains Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Liliana Ocampo, the pastoral coordinator of the Quito Mennonite Church, said her congregation takes the risk of welcoming refugees because of the example of Jesus, first-century Christians and early Anabaptists.

"Our ancestors lived for the gospel in exile, through persecution, discrimination, oppression, silencing, displacement and death," Ocampo says. "Today, the migrants, refugees and displaced people are our brothers and sisters."

According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Ecuador receives more Colombian asylum-seekers than any other country in the region. More than 23,000 Colombians have sought safety in Ecuador since January 2000.

Luis' life changed as he heard the word of God preached and as he experienced the touch of God's love through the ministry of the Quito believers. He allowed them to pray for him, and during the prayer he sensed "the spirit of violence" departing from his body.

When accused of being the perpetrator of violence against the Riveras, Luis says, "Although I continue to feel annoyed with the Rivera family, I can no longer attempt to end their lives, because I am a new person in Christ."

Not only does the Quito Mennonite Church offer housing and food to the Colombian refugees but members provide psychological care, educational services and assist families in finding ways to support themselves through small businesses.

Many of the refugees have witnessed the violent deaths of family members, endured physical suffering and lost everything they owned. María's* family is one of the four currently welcomed by the Quito Mennonite Church.

She, her husband and their four children have been on the run for six years because of her husband's leadership in an organization that spoke out against the government's human rights violations of peasant farmers. During these years, María has lived in constant fear that something will happen to her three daughters and her son. Her husband now lives in Spain.

María's family first encountered Mennonites in Colombia through the ministries for displaced people organized by the Teusaquillo congregation. There, in addition to receiving material assistance María and her family attended Bible studies and learned to make bocadillo, a snack made from guava pulp. Income from the sale of these snacks permits María to buy food and pay bus fares.

Finding a school for her children has been painful for María.

"As soon as school authorities heard my [Colombian] accent, they told me there was no room for my children," María says. "The people of Ecuador think all Colombians are violent robbers."

Ocampo tutored María's children along with five other refugee children until they were accepted into a school recently.

"I don't know where I would be without the church," María says. "I have suffered much, but God has not forgotten me. Through the church I'm able to keep moving forward and find a new life."—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen for Mennonite Mission Network*

*The names of the refugees have been changed to protect their identities.

Leaders call for education opportunities

Mennonite education summit confronts needs of racial/ethnic Mennonites

Marathana Prothro

Elaine Moyer and Steve Bustos work at a table group session during the Education Opportunities Summit. Moyer represented Christopher Dock Mennonite High School in Lansdale, Pa., and Bustos represented MMA.

"God's going to do a brand new thing," said Addie Banks. "God's strength, power and desire will bring it about; I pray that we will be able to receive it.

Banks, a pastoral leader from New York City and Mennonite Church USA Executive Board member, shared this vision with participants during the recent Education Opportunities Summit in Los Angeles.

Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) collaborated with Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church USA Intercultural Relations to sponsor the Feb. 19 to 21 event, with the aim of addressing the education needs of racial/ethnic and urban church members. It was the second event in Mennonite Church USA's Urban and Racial/Ethnic Education Initiative.

We are determined that Anabaptist education is an expectation and not an exception for our youth.—Roy Williams

Summit participants included representatives from educational institutions of all levels and area conference, constituency group and urban leaders. They decided together on the next step—an Education Opportunities Task Force to articulate a holistic education vision for urban and racial/ethnic members of Mennonite Church USA. Mennonite Education Agency was asked to commission the task force this summer and provide annual updates on its work.

(Mennonite Church USA uses the term "racial/ethnic" to refer to those who have been underrepresented or excluded because of their race or ethnicity. The term generally includes African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American people, among others.)

"People should care about this because ultimately it's an issue of being the kind of faithful community God wants us to be," said Mennonite Education Agency executive director Carlos Romero. "And it's not about a one-way flow of resources; it's about different parts learning to give to each other."

Romero said many people within Mennonite Church USA are aware that the needs exist, but it's necessary to establish priorities.

"As a small denomination we cannot do it all," Romero said. "Together, we need to determine what needs to focus on."

Romero proposed an increase in the number of Mennonite racial/ethnic and urban students in the church's schools as one such focus.

Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, said just and equitable access to education is part of its agenda as an antiracist and missional denomination.

Moderator Roy Williams, who pastors a racial/ethnic congregation in Tampa, Fla., said, "We are determined that Anabaptist education is an expectation and not an exception for our youth."

As they worked together, summit participants focused on three themes: accessibility, trust and leadership. Future work will include assessing the needs of racial/ethnic and urban Mennonites, developing partnerships and increasing leadership capacity.

They also encouraged people throughout Mennonite Church USA to begin or continue their own grassroots efforts to increase accessibility to education for urban dwellers and racial/ethnic people and share information about these efforts with Mennonite Education Agency.

Rosalind E. Andreas, chair of the MEA board of directors, said she marveled at "the talent, creativity, gifts, dedication and hard work that is being done to live out God's purpose. My hope is that as we continue this journey we will start with a celebration of all the entrepreneurial activity that is still alive."

"I feel that we are moving in the right direction," Romero said. "This summit was a catalyst to move us forward with our missional effort to create education opportunities for all of Mennonite Church USA."—*Marathana Prothro for Mennonite Church USA*

Caregivers told to care for themselves

Health-care workers can become addicted to helping others, need sabbaths.

Theologian and author Wayne Muller told 329 Mennonite physicians, nurses, chaplains, health-care administrators and agency board members that they have the noble calling of being "a witness to the grace that is embedded in suffering" at the annual meeting of the Mennonite Health Assembly near Sunset Beach, N.C., March 2-5.

However, Muller quickly encouraged caregivers—in the midst of holding and healing, teaching and accompanying—to take time to "step back and drink in the beauties of creation. When our lives become clogged with worry and too many things to hold, we become ineffective and incapable of doing good."

Muller's address on "A Rhythm of Work and Rest" launched three days of discussions on the assembly theme, "Stewards of Health at Work." The assembly is sponsored annually by MHS Alliance and Mennonite Mutual Aid.

Muller said that while health-care professionals know how to take care of themselves, they need to give themselves permission to take a break from their work. He noted the example of Jesus, who "every once in a while would disappear from all those people who needed to be cared for." He said that caregivers can become addicted to responding to emergencies so that they can come charging into situations to save others.

Muller, author of the book *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives*, encouraged his listeners to appropriate God's fourth commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

"If you are waiting to take a Sabbath after you have cleaned off your desk, you will die exhausted at your desk," Muller warned.

He wondered whether personal illness has become the one condition that allows caregivers in our culture to find the rest for themselves that they should enjoy on a regular basis.

In a second presentation, titled "Creating Space for Renewal in the Workplace," Muller contrasted the rhythms of the head and heart. He said the mind has the capacity to shift the images it holds rapidly, but the heart moves much more slowly. Computers and cell phones imitate the mind, he said, but heart matters such as love and kindness, healing and presence take a lot more time to process.

"Are there ways we can be sure we are seeing and hearing one another and those who come to us for care?" Muller asked.

While some health maintenance organizations require 35 patient contacts each day, he said that "at a certain point in caregivers' work with patients, the greatest gift is to be present with an open heart and open hand."

In a third plenary session, Ingrid Friesen Moser, stewardship of health program manager at MMA, helped participants envision practical ways to "Walk the Talk." She critiqued health fads while asking caregivers to draw on their faith in creating healthier lifestyles and organizational environments.

"We all have spirituality," said Friesen Moser. "The question is where we are seeking health and wholeness in our lives."

She encouraged the audience to develop deeper connections to their faith tradition as they think about health care. The importance of community and role of mutual aid are powerful in the healing process, she said.

Friesen Moser asked caregivers "to go from here and lead by example." She advised leaders to "get your life in shape first," to be authentic and vulnerable to others in our congregational and organizational settings, and to "go where the Spirit is already at work" in bringing hope to the world.

Daily worship services were also an important part of the assembly. Participants contributed $2,200 during a Saturday offering to assist Jubilee Mennonite Church in Meridian, Miss., with rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina. The offering will go toward a project started before the hurricane to enable the congregation to create office space for case workers working with evacuees. *—Stuart W. Showalter of Mennonite Health Services Alliance*

Every once in a while [Jesus] would disappear from all those people who needed to be cared for. —Wayne Muller

Spirituality and the nursing shortage

"Spirituality and the Nursing Shortage" was the presentation theme for the Mennonite Nurses Association (MNA) luncheon during the 2006 Mennonite Health Assembly in Sunset Beach, N.C. Nurses attending were challenged to reflect on how spirituality, their values and the nursing shortage affect their nursing practice.

Vicky Kirkton, director of Goshen (Ind.) College's nursing program, led this discussion and challenged participants to think about the ways their spiritual values are challenged in caring for patients with today's nursing shortage. Using the core values of Goshen's nursing program, she traced how those values shape the practice of nursing for Goshen graduates and how those values relate to the practice of other Anabaptist nurses. Finally she challenged Anabaptist nurses to find creative ways to move out of those values clashes and respond to their patients and the splintered health-care system with creative, healing actions.

In other business, MNA president Phyllis Miller announced the launch of the organization's newly renovated Web site at http://mna.mennonite.net. Nurses attending who were not already members of MNA were invited to consider becoming a part of the organization that represents nurses from across the Mennonite church.—*Mennonite Nurses Association*

MMA gave $916,490 to churches in 2005

Evangelism was top priority for matching grants in MC USA congregations.

What kinds of community outreach efforts are important to Mennonite Church USA congregations today? One way to find out is to follow the time and money trail.

Many Mennonite Church USA congregations use matching grants from MMA to help fund their community outreach ministries. To receive these grants, churches must first commit their own time and money toward the ministry. A profile of 271 grants that MMA gave to congregations in 2005 provides a picture of outreach that has captured church members' hearts and called them to action.

Evangelism was the most common priority for these congregations—38 grants helped fund varied evangelism efforts, and another 22 were for outreach through vacation Bible school.

Providing food for disadvantaged people in their communities—over 30 grants—was another common outreach ministry by the congregations.

Partnering with "clearinghouse" organizations is another way that congregations were able to reach out to their communities. Clearinghouses, typically run by an ecumenical network of local congregations, provide various kinds of assistance to local people in need. Habitat for Humanity is another common outreach program that's not directly affiliated with any one congregation or denomination but brings together resources to accomplish far greater results than one church could typically produce in their community. A total of 21 grants were for Habitat housing ministries.

Many churches' community outreach ministries targeted children and youth. Ministries ranged from year-round day-care centers and preschools to community playgrounds. The grants also helped congregations meet the special needs of disabled children and children from disadvantaged families. Congregations also assisted older youths—with tutoring programs, youth centers, Christian education, campus ministries and alternatives to joining the military.

Sharing Fund grants totaled $100,220 to Mennonite Church USA congregations for these outreach ministries; the congregations gave $282,475 of their own funds to these ministries in 2005. Congregations received matching Sharing Fund grants for many other needs in their congregations as well; a total of $916,490 was given to Mennonite Church USA congregations last year.
—Judy Martin Godshalk of MMA

Top 15 grant categories for 2005

RECIPIENTS	PURPOSE	PROGRAM	GRANTS GIVEN	MMA GRANT	CHURCH MATCH
Everyone	Evangelism	Varied activities	38	$10,909	$34,123
Disadvantaged	Social aid	Food pantries, etc.	30	8,920	25,551
Children	Evangelism	VBS	22	7,841	15,766
Disadvantaged	Social aid	Community needs	21	9,517	33,809
Disadvantaged	Social aid	Housing programs	21	9,285	30, 125
Disadvantaged	Social aid	Shelters	15	5,585	11,382
Youth	Social aid	Youth ministries	10	4,179	14,156
Children	Education	Preschool	9	4,500	16,366
Children	Social aid	Day camp	9	4,300	10,178
Victims/offender	Social aid	Reconciliation work	8	3,750	19,767
Children/youth	Social aid	Kids clubs	7	2,188	4,966
Disabled	Social aid	Programs	6	1,971	4,767
Immigrants	Education	English classes	5	2,041	2,825
Women	Social aid	Programs	5	1,562	4,475
Women	Social aid	Crisis pregnancies	5	1,550	2,095

Source: MMA

New chapel for teaching preaching

Three days of reading the Word dedicates AMBS' Chapel of the Word.

Mary E. Klassen

Mary Etta King, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary student from Lancaster, Pa., reads from the pulpit in the new Chapel of the Word at AMBS. Students, faculty and staff members took turns reading from "The Word" for three days as part of the dedication of the small chapel which serves as a place for teaching preaching and worship leading.

Activity for the dedication of the new Chapel of the Word at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) began three days before the actual dedication service as students, faculty and staff took turns reading the Bible from the chapel's pulpit. Reading began on Feb. 28 and continued until the late morning worship service on March 3.

The chapel, created by pushing out the exterior wall of a classroom, is devoted to teaching preaching and worship leading. Because of this purpose the name "Chapel of the Word" was chosen. Because of the chapel's name the seminary community joined in reading "the Word" as a way to dedicate the space. The Psalms were read first, followed by the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament.

"Proclamation of the Word is the heart of ministry and at the center of the seminary," Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president, said.

The room is designed to be very different from a classroom, June Alliman Yoder, professor of preaching and communication, explained.

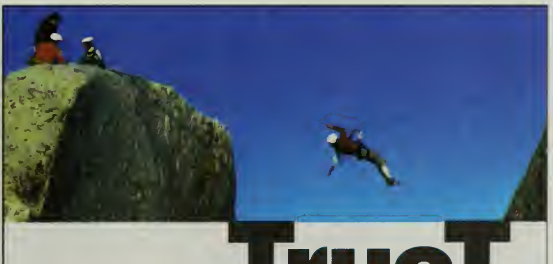
"We are taking teaching and learning into worship space rather than taking worship into a classroom space," Yoder said.

The worship-like space and the small size make the Chapel of the Word ideal for classes in which students learn how to preach, to lead worship singing and to conduct rituals such as communion and baptism.

In addition, the room is equipped with state-of-the-art technology to help students learn how to use the technology in worship leading and to allow them to learn from viewing recordings of themselves.

Proclamation of the Word is the heart of ministry and at the center of the seminary.—Nelson Kraybill

Funding for the Chapel of the Word came through the seminary's Next Generation Fund for Church Leadership. Major donors were Peter and Helen Redekop and Peter and Charlotte Wall of British Columbia. Their gift was in recognition of their parents, Jacob and Maria Redekop.—*Mary E. Klassen of Associate Mennonite Biblical Seminary*



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CALENDAR

MCC Bike/Hike/Run, May 6, Belleville, Pa. For information or to register email Alan Kauffman at ank@pa.net.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Haddad, Clement E.H., Feb. 22, to Peter and Deborah Kilheffer Haddad, Scottdale, Pa.

Kulp, Maura Paige, Jan. 23, to Jared and Kate Myers Kulp, Ottsville, Pa.

McFadden, William Troyer, March 5, to Susan Lehman and D.J. McFadden, Millersburg, Ohio.

Miller, Tucker Jay, Feb. 27, to Ben and Nicole Yoder Miller, Kalona, Iowa.

Nofziger, Preston Eli, Feb. 18, to Doug and Michelle Stutzman Nofziger, Bryan, Ohio.

Range, Dustin Leet, Feb. 23, to Adam Range and Lisa Estle Loewen, Lehigh, Kan.

Roes, Dominic Ray, Feb. 20, to Donald and Brandi Roberts Roes, Lowville, N.Y.

Rush, Matthew Lewis, March 8, to Dave and Julette Leaman Rush, Harrisonburg, Va.

Siemens-Rhodes, Adam Hae, March 12, to Mitch and Heidi Siemens-Rhodes, Goshen, Ind.

Smithey, Alison Fiona, Feb. 7, to Lee and Judith Clark Smithey, Rutledge, Pa.

Springer, Samuel Joseph, March 11, to Doug and Cindy Braden Springer, Peoria, Ill.

Wehr, Lauren Jane, Feb. 21, to John and Debra Wedel Wehr, Rosendale, Mo.

White, William Carl, Nov. 14, to Kris and Megan Mowery White, Newton, Kan.

Witmer, Juan Thut, received for adoption Dec. 20, 2005, by Douglas and Rebecca Thut Witmer, Philadelphia, Pa.

Xiong, Ling Margot Heidi and Lili Eleanor Hiedi (twins), March 6, to Wade and Heidi Ratzlaff Xiong, Austin, Texas.

Yoder, Robert Josiah, March 10, to Bob and Pamela Bressler Yoder, Goshen, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Entz/Waltner: Merlyn Entz, Newton, Kan., and Melissa Waltner, Hesston, Kan., March 4 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Gaeddert/Johnson: Jason Gaeddert, Inman, Kan., and Kristy Johnson, Newton, Kan., March 11 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Jones/Mueller: Justin Jones, Archbold, Ohio, and Sabrina Mueller, Wauseon, Ohio, Feb. 25 at Tedrow (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Bucher, Roy C., 86, Lititz, Pa., died March 10. Spouse: Betty Jane Ruppert Bucher. Parents: Elmer and Maria Carper Bucher. Children: Judy Hope, Carlene Meyers, Darrel; foster child: Norma Imhoff; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Memorial service: March 14 at Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Buller, Margaret M. "Maggie" Thiessen, 85, Inman, Kan., died Feb. 12. Children: Larry M., Steve M.; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Bunch, Helen Thompson, 96, Warrington, Pa., died March 13. Spouse: Dewey H. Bunch, Sr. (deceased). Parents: John and Clara Hayes Thompson. Children: Joan Carter, Priscilla Fuller, Dewey H., Robert; 15 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 18 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Burgetz, Erma Zehr, 74, Kitchener, Ont., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Kenneth Burgetz. Parents: Daniel and Edna Zehr. Children: Judy Shantz, Linda Grimmer, Paul, Sandra; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 6 at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

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– MATTHEW 5:9
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Burgetz, Roy, 87, Kitchener, Ont., died Jan. 26. Spouse: Florence Uttley Burgetz. Parents: Allan and Julia Burgetz. Child: Allan (deceased); three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 28 at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

Enns, Tilly, 92, Orillia, Ont., died Dec. 13, 2005. Spouse: Henry Enns (deceased). Children: Laurence, Richard; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 17, 2005 at Ratz-Bechtel Funeral Chapel, Kitchener, Ont.

Frederick, Sarah Jones, 87, Mertztown, Pa., died Feb. 21. Parents: David and Ella Strouse Jones. Children: John Mark, Daniel, Rhoda Weiseman, Ruth Bowman, Sarah Stauffer, Mary; 15 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 25 in Colebrookdale Township, Pa.

Gingerich, Peter, 90, Dundee, Ohio, died March 8. Spouse: Alma Miller Gingerich (deceased). Parents: William and Elizabeth Wagler Gingerich. Children: Raymond, Edna, Elizabeth Stempfley; nine grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 11 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Halteman, Thomas Dean, 36, Tioga, Pa., died March 9. Parents: Harold and Marilyn Bergey Halteman. Funeral: March 14 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Hodel, Marie Brunk, 86, New Holland, Pa,. died March 7. Spouse: Walter Hodel (deceased). Parents: George and Anna Holloway Brunk. Children: Michael, Anne Niemiec, Hilda Alajajian; six grandchildren. Funeral: March 11 at Garden Spot Village, New Holland.

Horning, Titus Horst, 86, Ephrata, Pa., died Feb. 22. Spouse: Grace Nissly Horning (deceased). Parents: Noah H. and Maria H. Horning. Children: Barbara Weaver, Nancy; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 26 in Lancaster, Pa.

Huber, Vida Jane Swartzentruber, 68, Harrisonburg, Va., died Nov. 20, 2005, of an intracerebral hemorrhage. Spouse: Harold E. Huber. Parents: Laban and Nanna Bender Swartzentruber. Child: Heidi Huber-Schanberger; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 23 in Harrisonburg, Va.

Johnson, Bertrand Zeke, 80, Goessel, Kan., died Jan. 7. Spouse: Verda Johnson (deceased). Parents: Obed and Esther Johnson. Children: Pam Doyle, Jan Higdon, Debbie Reed; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10 at First Mennonite Church, Halstead.

Kauffman, Esther, 85, Kalispell, Mont., died Feb. 12. Spouse: Paul S. Kauffman. Parents: Glen and Cora Borntrager. Children: E. Elaine, Dan, Ken, Steve, Brenda Younger, Alice Aernson; 14 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Kalispell.

King, Pauline Clare, 85, Goshen, Ind., died March 10. Spouse: Paul Leonard King (deceased). Parents: Reuben and Mary Zook Yoder. Children: Titus, James, John, Daniel, David, Susanne Berlin; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Memorial service: March 18 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Koch, Florence, 96, Kitchener, Ont., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Howard Koch (deceased). Child: Manley. Funeral: Jan. 20 at Edward R. Good Funeral Home Chapel, Waterloo, Ont.

Kurtz, Rev. Omar A., 93, Ephrata, Pa., died Feb. 1. Spouse: Emily Kurtz. Parents: Jacob E. and Rebecca Most Kurtz. Children: J. Edward, Lowell C., David M. Mast, Chris Troyer, Salome Leinbach, Dorothy Martin; 15 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson, Pa.

Litwiller, Lawrence J., 93, Morton, Ill., died March 16. Spouse: Gladys Martin Litwiller. Parents: Daniel and Lena Wittrig Litwiller. Children: Larry Wayne, Don, Myron; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 21 at Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Moyer, Orville K., 80, Sellersville, Pa., died Feb. 9. Spouse: Laura Myers Moyer (deceased). Parents: William and Irene Kulp Moyer. Children: Nevin, David; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 15 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

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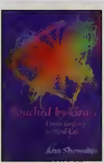
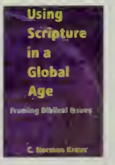


Touched by Grace: From Secrecy to New Life, Ann Showalter, whose "honesty and courage in the face of her husband's homosexuality and AIDS not only brought healing to Ray and to their family but shaped the future of her ministry as a Mennonite pastor." —*Norma S. Sutton*. 196 p, $13.95



Using Scripture in a Global Age: Framing the Biblical Issues, C. Norman Kraus. "Few can so competently use and integrate the disciplines of biblical studies, historical theology, Anabaptist studies, missiology, and North American church history. " —*Mark D. Baker*. 200 p; $19.95

Separation and the Sword in Anabaptist Persuasion

Separation and the Sword in Anabaptist Persuasion: Radical Confessional Rhetoric from Schleitheim to Dordrecht, Gerald Biesecker-Mast, who "deftly applies a postmodern rhetorical analysis to illumine how early Anabaptists articulated the struggle for both separation and toleration to support a radical Christian posture." —*Susan Schultz Huxman*. 312 p; $22.95

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"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@the-mennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

Mueller, Luella Lohrentz, 93, Halstead, Kan., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Alfred Mueller (deceased). Parents: Henry and Margaret Lohrentz. Children: Jerry, Glenn; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 22 at First Mennonite Church, Halstead.

Plank, Doris Evelyn Slaubaugh, 87, Kalona, Iowa, died Feb. 23. Spouse: Dave Plank. Parents: Milton and Nettie Stutzman Slaubaugh. Child: Linda Huber; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 27 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Roy, Evelyn Bobeck, 92, Topeka, Ind., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Burdette Roy (deceased). Parents: Freeman and Pearl Bobeck. Children: Sharron Seniff, Susan Moser, Sheryl Schrock, Sally Prymak; 10 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 6 at Topeka Mennonite Church.

Rush, Olive L., 80, Plumsteadville, Pa., died March 10. Parents: Raymond and Sallie Leatherman Rush. Funeral: March 15 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Ruth, Fern Pankratz, 86, North Newton, Kan., died March 11. Spouse: Emry A. Ruth. Parents: Cornelius and Margarethe Regier Pankratz. Children: Rachel Poling, J. Raymond; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 16 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Schlegel, Viola L. Burkey Stutzman, 90, Milford, Neb., died Feb. 18. Spouse: Willard Schlegel (deceased). Parents: William and Jemima Burkey. Children: Fred, Robert Stutzman, Merna Schweitzer, Gail Schweitzer, Glenda Veal, Carol Newton, Cheryl Pelley; 16 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Schrag, Leslie, 85, Vancouver, Wash., died Feb. 26. Spouse: Colleen Oliver Schrag (deceased). Parents: Jonathan and Fannie Schrag. Children: Lorna Fitzgerald, Rhoda Friesen; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 4 at the Forum Room at Waterford Retirement Center, Vancouver.

Steiner, Jean Esther, 75, North Lima, Ohio, died Feb. 23 of cancer. Spouse: Paul Steiner. Parents: Port and Elta Leinbach Mellinger. Children: Elaine Williams, Beverly Kimmel, Philip; 15 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 27 at North Lima Mennonite Church.

Stoltzfus, Edna Umble, 96, Harrisburg, Pa., died March 1 of dehydration. Spouse: Henry S. Stoltzfus (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Carrie Coyle Umble. Children: Wayne, Marlin, Leona Salter, Charlotte Hershey; 13 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 6 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Voth, Thomas "Tom" Roy, 63, Moundridge, Kan., died March 10 of cancer. Parents: Milo and Fern Johnson Voth. Funeral: March 14 at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge.

Wagler, David E., 54, Hartville, Ohio, died March 14. Spouse: Delilah Hershberger Wagler. Parents: Eli and Edith Wagler. Child: Jennifer Aguirre; two grandchildren. Funeral: March 20 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

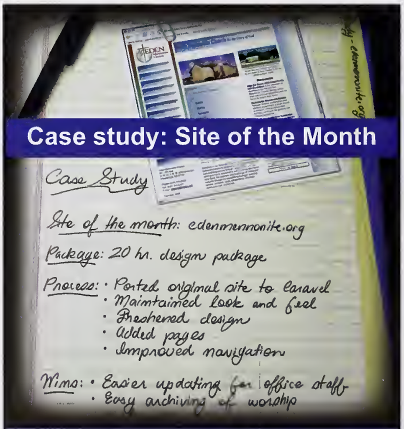
Weber, Alson, 95, Waterloo, Ont., died Dec. 29, 2005. Spouse: Loraine Snyder (deceased). Parents: Irvin B. and Magdalena Weber. Children: John, James, Ross; 10 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

Weber, Ethel Witmer, 96, Cambridge, Ont., died Feb. 23. Spouse: Byron S. Weber (deceased). Child: Virginia (Gini) Letkemann; three grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 27 at Fairview Mennonite Home, Cambridge.

Yoder, Mabel D., 101, Albany, Ore, died March 3. Parents: Daniel D. and Drusilla Miller Yoder. Funeral: March 8 at Mennonite Home Chapel, Albany.

Zehr, Clifford, 78, Waterloo, Ont., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Jean Keast Zehr. Parents: Emory and Selena Zehr. Children: Gerald, Sandra. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

Zook, Raymond, 88, Kalona, Iowa., died Feb. 27. Spouse: Mildred Gingerich Zook. Parents: Edd T. and Martha Bender Zook. Children: Dorothea Moberly, Muriel Draper, Gloria Zradicka; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 2 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.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To apply send your CV and inquiry to opportunities@lcc.lt. For more information on current openings visit our Web site at www.lcc.lt/opportunities.

Applications and nominations are now being accepted for the 10-month position of ***campus minister***. Starting date is Aug. 1. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the **Goshen College** Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***full-time associate director of development*** to oversee fund-raising efforts and relationships with current and potential supporters. Qualifications: Creative ability to initiate and implement new programs/projects, strong motivator, relationship builder, knowledge of EMM and constituency. Position begins June 1. To apply, contact Jeanette Hess (jeanetteh@emm.org or 717-898-2251) by April 12.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***full-time representative to the U.S. and Canada*** to provide leadership for EMM's long-term work in these countries. Qualifications: cross-cultural and church-planting experience, heart for prayer, leadership and organizational skills, ability to share vision and recruit. Position begins June 1. To apply, contact Jeanette Hess (jeanetteh@emm.org or 717-898-2251) by April 12.

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* There will be a 1 percent premium on construction loans during the construction period.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following positions for the 2006-07 school year: ***mathematics instructor, physical science/physics instructor, social studies instructor*** (full-time, second semester).

Send resumé to: Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale PA 19446; fax: 215-362-2943; email: eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

Beaver Camp, a year-round Christian camp and retreat center in the western Adirondacks, is now accepting applications for the position of ***executive director***. We seek a mature, Christian individual with considerable administrative camping experience to oversee and manage our 37-year-old ministry serving youth and families. Bachelor's degree minimum. Fundraising and grant writing experience also helpful. Competitive salary and benefits. Send cover letter, resume and three references to herrdale@frontiernet.net or mail to L. Herr, 7161West Road Lowville, NY 13367.

Greencroft, a faith-based Continuing Care Retirement Community, is seeking a ***director of Greencroft Middlebury***, located in Northern Indiana. This position is responsible for the overall operations of the housing community on Greencroft Middlebury campus. Bachelor's degree preferred, two years or more of CCRC independent housing management experience required, or certified as a Residential Housing Professional (RFP) required. Strong hospitality skills, organizational skills and attention to detail a must for this position. Go to www.greencroft.org for details or contact Greencroft Staff Recruiter at 574-537-4084 with questions. Complete job description available upon request. Resumés welcome. EOE

Eastern Mennonite University announces faculty openings beginning Fall 2006.

Biology: Full-time, continuing faculty position in biomedical sciences. Ph.D. preferred, A.B.D. considered. Responsibilities include teaching human anatomy and physiology and additional courses which may include microbiology, introductory biology courses and a course in the candidate's specialty.

Education: Two full-time, continuing faculty positions in Education. Ph.D. in education preferred; A.B.D. or master's degree in education considered. Teaching areas include elementary education, special education, teaching English as a Second Language. Candidates must have K12 experience. Teaching load, depending on expertise, includes teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in elementary school methods, special education curriculum, constructivist curriculum, educational psychology, children's literature, diverse learners, English as a Second Language, reading and writing. Positions will be shaped according to candidates' expertise.

Nursing: Full-time, continuing faculty position in nursing. Ph.D. in nursing or other terminal degree preferred; master's degree acceptable. Responsibilities include teaching classes in fundamentals and adult health nursing, or adult health and obstetrics, and supervising clinical experiences. Adjunct position in adult health also available.

Responsibilities for each position also include student advising, university service and ongoing scholarship.

EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite Christian faith practices. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email ugdean@emu.edu. Visit www.emu.edu online. Application review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the positions at any time or keep the positions open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Greeley (Colo.) Mennonite Church is seeking a ***full-time pastor***, beginning late summer, to minister to a committed group of 50-plus Anabaptists in a growing university town. If pastoring a growth-minded church on the Front Range of sunny Colorado in a newly restructured conference appeals to you, contact Linda Miller at 4millers2@comcast.net or call 970-353-3795.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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MCC urgent opening: ***resource generation network coordinator***, Akron, Pa. Needed June 1, 2006. Coordinates resource generation network for MCC offices across Canada and the United States. Coordinates the establishment of standards in fund-raising, setting goals and building network capacities. Experience in nonprofit fund-raising preferred with excellent skills in communication and management. Contact Lowell Detweiler at lcd@mcc.org or call 717-859-1151 for job description and further information.

Goshen College has an opening for a ***part-time women's volleyball head coach position*** beginning July 2006, for the 2006-07 academic year and beyond. Planning and recruitment work could start earlier. For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Eastern Mennonite School is seeking ***professionally certified teachers*** who share the call for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment. Position openings for the 2006-07 school year include: sixth grade, science (grades 8, 9 and 10), information technology (grades 6-9).

Interested candidates are encouraged to express their interest by April 15 to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or by email: leamanp@emhs.net, or phone: 540-432-4502. Equal opportunity employer

Hesston College seeks a ***chief financial officer.*** Knowledge and experience in finance and human resources required. Advanced degree in business or finance preferred. Qualifications include commitment to Anabaptist distinctives, understanding and commitment to the mission of Hesston College, and ability to lead collaboratively with all administrative areas. Review of applications begins March 15. Beginning date negotiable but preferably on or before July 1. Send letter of application and vita to President's Office, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. Further information regarding this position and additional materials needed to complete the application are at the college's Web site—www.hesston.edu/employment. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

Goshen College is seeking an ***assistant custodial supervisor*** to assist the custodial supervisor in the management of custodial operations and the supervision of staff and students, assuming full responsibility of the custodial department in the absence of the supervisor. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2006.

Seeking ***dorm life director*** to lead dorm program and develop a nurturing, caring, Christ-centered community. Responsibilities include managing dorm staff, planning weekday and weekend activities, providing a safe, enjoyable, learning environment and being a role model and mentor for youth. Leadership and youth work experience desired. Must be willing to work with students from different cultures.

Assistant dorm life director to provide planning, leadership and management support for the dorm life director.

The dorm life positions could be filled as a husband and wife team.

Food services director to direct food preparation and supervise kitchen staff. Manage inventory, record keeping, the federal lunch program and student assistants. Ensure health standards are followed. Create a healthy atmosphere for students and staff. Experience required.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students locally and from various states/provinces/countries. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ. All positions are full-time, 10 months, with benefits. Contact Mike Wenger at 866-343-9378 or mwenger@westernmennoniteschool.org.

English conversation teachers needed! **Connexus**; a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry; needs University grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster (Pa.), a growing congregation of 250+ adults and 130 children and youth, seeks applicants for a half-time ***associate pastor*** and a half-time ***director of children and youth ministry***. Apply by April 30; positions could be combined. Contact Ruth Mellinger Martin through the church office: 717-392-7567 or cmcl@mennonite.net. See job descriptions at cmcl.pa.us.mennonite.net.

Search for President/CEO Oaklawn Psychiatric Center Goshen, Indiana

As our president of 28 years retires, Oaklawn seeks a proven leader with a commitment to mission and genuine caring about the well-being of clients, staff and community. The ideal candidate will possess:

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- Experience in maintaining an effective presence with local and state legislature.

It is expected that the President will live in and become a vital participant in the community and demonstrate a life of faith consistent with the mission statement of Oaklawn.

Sponsored by Mennonite Health Services Alliance, Oaklawn is the only faith-based provider for mental health and addictions services in Indiana. Oaklawn offers a complete range of services for children, adolescents, adults and seniors, specializing in skilled, intensive services. Oaklawn's commitment to treatment of the whole person—mind, body and spirit—along with our excellent staff of 500 and our innovative treatment programs, provide a unique foundation for healing and hope. For further information, visit our web site at www.oaklawn.org. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Please respond in confidence to:
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Search Committee of the Board
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OAKLAWN
Toward Health and Wholeness

Saving Souls, Serving Society: Understanding the Faith Factor in Church-Based Social Ministry by Heidi Rolland Unruh and Ronald J. Sider (Oxford University Press, 2005, $35) draws on case studies of 15 Philadelphia-area Protestant congregations with active outreach to explore the religious dynamics of social ministry. The book offers a constructive approach to church-state partnerships.

Meditations for the Grieving by Richard L. Morgan (Herald Press, 2005, $9.99) presents 30 meditations that offer insight and spiritual counsel for those experiencing grief due to the death of a loved one or the "living death" of Alzheimer's disease or other terminal illnesses. Each meditation is connected with a Bible story or verse.

Blessing the Animals: Prayers and Ceremonies to Celebrate God's Creatures, Wild and Tame, edited by Lynn L. Caruso (SkyLight Paths, 2006, $19.99), collects blessings, ancient and contemporary, from many faith traditions—including Native American, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist.

Be Still (92 minutes, $19.98) is an interactive DVD that provides a contemplative look at the history, importance and power of prayer from a cross-denominational point of view. The film features such Christian authors as Henry Cloud, Richard Foster, Max Lucado, Beth Moore, Priscilla Shirer and Dallas Willard.

The Thief Lord (99 minutes, $19.98), based on Cornelia Funke's novel, is a family DVD about two boys who escape from their mean aunt to the city of Venice, where they encounter the Thief Lord and his gang of ragamuffin child runaways, leading to an adventure that leaves them all changed.

The Little Book of Trauma Healing: When Violence Strikes and Community Security Is Threatened by Carolyn Yoder (Good Books, 2005, $4.95) addresses communities and societies caught in cycles of victimhood and/or violence, and those who experience trauma caused by terrorists or tsunamis, ongoing occupation or oppression.

John Howard Yoder: Mennonite Patience, Evangelical Witness, Catholic Convictions by Mark Thiessen Nation (Eerdmans, 2006, $20) provides an insider's introduction to Yoder, a leading Christian witness against violence who articulated a theology from his Mennonite tradition so powerful that it compelled people from many other traditions to take notice. The book explores Yoder's context, his keen interest in the Anabaptist tradition, his sustained engagement with other Christians and other faiths and his claim that pacifism is inherent in Jesus' message.

Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading by Eugene H. Peterson (Eerdmans, 2006, $20) challenges us to read the Scriptures on their own terms, as God's revelation, and to live them as we read them. The book draws readers into conversation on the nature of language, the ancient practice of "lectio divina" and the role of Scripture translations, including the inside story behind Peterson's own popular Bible translation, *The Message*.

Befriending the Stranger by Jean Vanier (Eerdmans, 2005, $15) reflects on who we are and how we build our communities amid the violence and corruption of the modern world. Through six meditative pieces based on Scripture, Vanier opens up God's invitation to create new places of belonging and sharing, peace and kindness.

Sing the Journey CD by Kenneth Nafziger and the Journey Musicians (Herald Press, 2006, $15.99) features 18 hymns found in *Sing the Journey*, including "One Is the Body," "God of the Bible," "Beloved, God's Chosen," "Rain Down," "Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo," "How Can We Be Silent," "Creation Is a Song," "Ubi Caritas" and "All Will Be Well."

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Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking a research specialist to assist in supporting MMA's stewardship investing commitment and activities by providing primary oversight for corporate social research and monitoring, producing special issue and analysis reports, managing corporate watch lists, and engaging companies on social concerns. Qualified candidates will have a bachelor's degree; research, data analysis, and written communication skills; proven presentation skills; and a passion for socially-responsible investing. Some travel is required.

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Here I raise mine Ebenezer

Regina Shands Stoltzfus

One of the happy surprises found in the yard of our new home three years ago were the piles of stones placed here and there throughout the property. I don't know the original meaning behind them, but I felt a connection with whoever collected and placed these stones. I collect stones, and throughout our house I have placed a number of small stone memorials—my Ebenezers. The story is told in 1 Samuel of how Samuel placed a stone as a sign of remembrance of the Lord's help.

I pick up stones to remember special places and events, like Samuel's stone of remembrance or the pile of stones placed by the Israelites in the Jordan after crossing over. I like the idea of a monument that makes one ask, What do these stones mean? And so a little pile of stones found in various camping sites rests on the windowsill above the kitchen sink, a basket of stones from Lake Michigan on the porch, a rock picked up on my first trip to Africa near my mirror.

I like what stones represent. Formed under tremendous amounts of pressure, stones are signs of endurance and permanence. Stones are strong. Stones, placed together, built up against one another, build things bigger and stronger than their individual selves. Much like families.

Stones are strong. Stones, placed together, built up against one another, build things bigger and stronger than their individual selves. Much like families.

My own family is shaped by several unconventional circumstances, depending upon one's perspective. We are at once a stepfamily, an adoptive family and a mixed-race family. We carry lots of other collective identities, but these are the ones that separate us from the "traditional" family; yet in the big picture we're not that unusual. Our stories are the stories of thousands of families across North America and the world. The individual stones that shape our family structure are forged out of loss and brokenness. A marriage ends. A mother relinquishes her child. A family visibly represents the history of fractured race relationships in this country. Here are the building blocks.

Although statistics reveal that the instance of divorce among families who regularly attend church is much lower than that of the general population, divorce is a reality within church communities. Recent studies of the George Barna group and others reveal that divorce among those who identify themselves as Christians may be higher than initially thought, and perhaps the higher-than-expected incidence may be due to the fact that individuals who experience a divorce feel their community of faith provides rejection rather than support and healing. The research also raises questions about the effectiveness of how faith communities relate to and minister to families.

The way faith communities can support families through brokenness and loss applies to adoptive parents who may decide to adopt because of infertility issues but also to biological parents who relinquish those children and to the children themselves through a lifetime of mixed emotions about the whole process and the meaning of family, place and identity. I am well aware that my own family's "building" is crafted from the weighty stones of another mother's grief. We know, too, that our child will periodically revisit her grief and anger, no matter how happy her life is with the family who chose her.

Anyone who wonders just how close we've come in our society to a place where race is just another interesting factor in an individual's life need only visit houses of worship. As Martin Luther King Jr. and others have said, Eleven o'clock (or 9:30, depending on where you live) Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America. For our family, what that means is our attendance at most any worship service guarantees that one of us will be in the distinct minority; at least one of us is the one "crossing over."

As a family, we are stronger for the experiences that have brought us together, especially the hard stories. Contemporary culture often trivializes, vilifies or stereotypes these kinds of stories through sensational reports and "reality" television. I am grateful the architecture of our family life is built on stones that connect our story to the larger biblical story. There we see how God has called together and crafted all kinds of families—think of Hagar, Sarah and their sons, Moses and Miriam, Ruth and Naomi. By faith in God, we, like them, have been carried through and continue to find places of joy along the journey. TM

Mennonite
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Willie Mae Thomas, MMA advocate and deacon of Hopewell Mennonite Church in Reading, Pa.

The real gift is in the giving.

Just ask Willie Mae Thomas, who says, "It's been a blessing to work with street ministries." The first female deacon of her congregation and an MMA advocate, Willie Mae is an excellent resource for people within her congregation and community.

Like other Mennonite Church USA congregations, Hopewell Mennonite Church offers countless ministry opportunities – from one-on-one ministries like hospital visitations and prisoner counseling to large-scale efforts like a community-wide youth ministry and food bank, a program partnered by Mennonite Mission Network.

Willie Mae knows involvement is the key to being part of God's plan. "Everyone has a gift," she says. "It's up to us to ask God, 'Where do you want me to be – and what do you want me to do?' " That faith is why Mennonite Church USA is joyfully following Jesus into the world – trusting that he will equip us to do his work in it.

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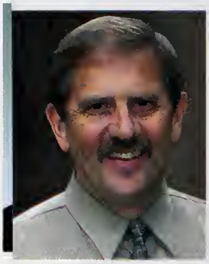

Everett J. Thomas

Up from the grave

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.—Matthew 27:51-53

What a moment! Matthew describes several astonishing events that happened immediately after Jesus breathed his last on the cross. God's Son was dead; the earth convulsed in pain. The sacredness of the temple—protected by the curtain guarding the Holy of Holies—was obliterated. This moment and Jesus' resurrection became the center of history for Christians.

Matthew adds some details about this moment that the other Gospel writers do not: Some of the faithful who were dead came out of their graves immediately after Jesus' death and appeared in the city to many of the living faithful.

To the first people who heard the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, a description of graves opening and saints appearing would have been mind-boggling. The matter of what happens to a person's body and soul after death was not a settled question in their theology. In fact, that question was an incendiary controversy in Judaism at the time of Jesus' life and ministry.

On Good Friday, God exploded human contrivance and conjecture; believers received a sign that God provides life after death regardless of tradition or behavior.

But Jesus' resurrection—with attendant stories about saints emerging from their graves—permanently altered the way those who follow God understand what happens after human life ends.

"Here the events and the language used to portray them reflect Ezekiel's promise of a day God would open the graves of his people and raise them to new life," says Richard B. Gardner in *Matthew* (Believers Church Bible Commentary).

Consider what it would have been like to believe in God and be faithful if we had lived in Jerusalem before this moment. We would have no assurance that after dying we would see God. Rather, our souls would wait in the earth ("Sheol") until the moment when God opened our graves at some indeterminate time in the future.

But not all religious leaders believed resurrection of the body or soul would happen. In fact, it was a major point of dispute for two major religious groups: the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

The conservative Sadducees—a sort of aristocracy in Israel determined to accept only those truths that could be proved from the Law (the first five books of our Bible)—did not accept the idea of resurrection because they could find no specific teaching about it in the Torah.

Pharisees, on the other hand, had a more flexible view of truth as revealed in their Scripture. While strict adherents of the Law—and occasionally criticized by Jesus for their legalism—they also adapted the Law to new situations. These adaptations included a belief in resurrection.

So on the day Jesus was nailed to the cross at Golgotha, those who believed him when he said he was the Christ of God were not getting much comfort from religious leaders about what happens after death. If one followed the aristocratic Sadducees—who tended to be too cozy with Herod and the occupying Romans—then there was no assurance that life continued in any form after the grave. If one followed the legalistic Pharisees—who kept themselves separate from both the Romans and the people—then one might hope for resurrection only if and when all God's people obeyed the law perfectly.

But on Good Friday, God exploded all such human contrivances and conjectures. From that point on, believers had a sign that God provides life after death regardless of tradition or behavior.

Among the many layers of meaning during Lent, Holy Week and the Easter season is this amazing truth: At this centerpoint of history as Christians know it, God revealed his offer for human creation to live again after life on this earth is over. We too may rise up from the grave.—*ejt*

Correction: The fourth sentence in the sidebar editorial on Feb. 21 should read, "... from Hispanic and Native American leaders who do not see themselves as people of color."

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TheMennonite

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April 18, 2006

Katrina and faith in action

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Racism is anti-Christian

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

Quakers and Mennonites have long understood that all portrayals of Jesus end up as idolized images of people's perceptions of themselves. Their houses of worship historically were devoid of any paintings of Christ because they knew that the Christian God transcends the gods of the culture.—The Church Enslaved: A Spirituality of Racial Reconciliation by Michael Battle and Tony Campolo

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?—Romans 12:1, NLT

Race and racism amount to a rejection of the purpose of the living God who created people in his image. Race ideology divides people of every nation, tribe and tongue into "racial groups," basing these divisions on cultural differences. Race is the idolization by one group of their self-perceptions. Race is a means whereby humans have exalted and humiliated themselves. Racism is the exertion of power by a majority both to self-idolization as well as through prejudice-based action against others.

The authors quoted above applaud Quakers and Mennonites' exclusion of idols from their houses of worship. Mennonites have refused to represent Christ in imagery so as to avoid the inevitable self-worship. The flags of nations are not on display in many Mennonite houses of worship and the offering is not a part of the order of worship. This focus on the Living God helps us deny some idols of our time. This focus is indebted to God's sanctification process in Jesus Christ.

Because of our focus upon Jesus, Mennonite organizations may be well-situated to eradicate the practice of racism from our congregations and organizations. Historically, however, Mennonite organizations have a mixed record dealing with the idolatry of race and racism. Our 1989 statement "A Church of Many Peoples Confronts Racism" calls congregations to renounce expressions and attitudes of racism as sin and to "identify and speak out against all forms of racism in our communities." This statement is ambitious and Mennonite congregations by and large are far from this level of activity.

Battle and Campolo exhort the church to formulate a spirituality of racial reconciliation, which would threaten the calm of Mennonite congregations regarding racism. Experiences in a variety of antiracist programs have moved some disciples to identify life-changing questions. Can a congregation in our time model a free Christian witness atop the rubble of racism? Does life in Christ make it possible for the church to live together free from the practice of racism? Can we renounce racism and live? Can we form a corporate life that bears witness to a nonracist understanding?

Rarely have I participated in conversations about racism in which participants were ready to seek answers to these types of questions. Some groups get distracted into finding answers to complex questions, mistaking question-asking for questing. I've watched training sessions dissolve into an eager rush to find the most immediate solutions to the most intractable and ancient problem of racism.

Paul's exhortation to the disciples in Rome certainly offered no quick fix. Rather he called disciples into a quest in which they would wrestle to free each part of their body from enslavement to sin, to give each body part to God as living and holy sacrifices.

Our lives must become the message we want people to hear; our neighbors must see what we believe in order to hear God's good news through our lips.

TheMennonite

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Cover photo and pages 8, 11 by Harold Regier, cover illustration by Dee Birkey

Vol. 9, No. 8, April 18, 2006

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 40033185, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526

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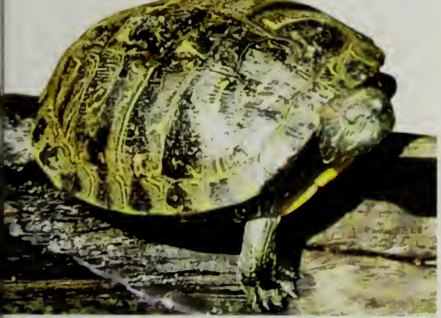

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Holding on to chastity

I applaud your March 21 issue that focused on sexual temptations and the rewards of chastity. Laurie Oswald Robinson's article highlights a much-needed and under-emphasized issue of Christian discipleship ("Many Waters Cannot Quench Love"). I am a middle-aged woman who married at age 40 and know something about the sacred gift of waiting until marriage. Also, the Kaufmans' article ("When Friendships Go Too Far") about workplace affairs opens a needed discussion. Chastity is a word that needs to be relevant instead of old-fashioned.—*Beverly Benner, Goshen, Ind.*

I commend the writers and editors of *The Mennonite* for their bold and gracious presentation of truth in the March 21 issue. In a world that is constantly prodding us to lower our sexual standards, we as Christians and a church body need encouragement to remain obedient and whole with regard to our sexuality. Thanks to Everett J. Thomas for the editorial reminding us that "the standard for chastity is absolute; when any of us violates that standard, sin is sin."

Let's all keep working to develop the support networks necessary to maintain the sexual purity of our personal lives and Christian fellowship. Isaiah 35:8 (NIV) says, "And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way."—*Forrest L. Moyer, Palm, Pa.*

'Cool' alienates youth

My impression from the March 7 issue ("The Faith of Our Youth") and experiences at camps and conferences is that when the Mennonite church tries to reach out to its youth, it tries too hard to be "cool" and therefore provides mainstream American Christian religious experience. I fear that this alienates a body of youth who may in fact prefer a more traditional Mennonite experience, including intelligent focus on Jesus' teachings rather than a mindless love affair with him. Perhaps the simplicity and self-absorption of the faith of many young Mennonites (and other Christians) comes not from youth that is intrinsically any different from past generations, but from adult leadership that is failing to provide youth with a solid foundation of Jesus the teacher rather than the pervasive image of Jesus the bridegroom. Love for God has its place, but if the church is de-emphasizing Jesus' teachings in favor of being "cool" for the youth as much as it appears, they are raising a generation of youth who are ill-educated in core Mennonite beliefs.—*Allison Boehm, Prairie Village, Kan.*

Prefer military to God

It was disheartening to me to read that humans with the least impulse for violence toward the United States of America were denied visas to attend Mennonite World Conference ("Empty Chairs at MWC Because Visas Denied," March 21). I could hardly imagine how Mennonites from all these countries—Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela—could constitute threats to the only superpower still standing. This story reminds me of Mark 10:13-16, where those with power attempted to prevent those without power from reaching the gracious reservoir of Jesus' divine power, peace and blessing. But our Lord overruled them and received the little children and blessed them.

Many American Christians seem to exchange the biblical imagery of dwelling under the shadow of the Almighty for the protection of the power of guns and governments. I am not surprised that contemporary global Christianity has become fragmented into national and political boundaries and parties. Most people today first identify with their nations before identifying themselves as Christians. Many American Christians—including some Mennonites—want the security of the United States to be preserved by all means at all cost—even when doing so hurts the global Christian witness. This nation has become so comfortable and self-sufficient that we easily can be compared with the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 who invited his soul to relax and enjoy the material accumulation of his labor. Many of us would rather be protected with militarism so we can continue to grow our wealth, wellness, and worry-free lives.—*Chibu V. Ozor, pastor, Ann Arbor (Mich.) Mennonite Church*

IN THIS ISSUE

Hurricane Katrina left Louisiana and Mississippi so devastated last year that it will take years for the area to recover. The devastation is so immense that our minds can scarce conceive the magnitude. But personal stories of those who survived—and those who are trying to help—can keep this national and long-term crisis before us. Rosella Wiens Regier and Harold Regier (page 8) describe their congregation's efforts to connect with one small community near Gulfport, Miss. Jane Yoder-Short offers a new twist on the Matthew 25 parable of the nobleman who left money with three of his servants to invest (page 12). Barry Bartel (page 14) reflects on Mennonite mission work in the Argentine Chaco after viewing the movie *The Motorcycle Diaries*. Steve Koenig describes his difficulties finding companionship in Mennonite church circles (page 18).—*Editor*

Other Mennonites also helped

Tom Finger's report of the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches ("Mennonites Help Write WCC Statement," March 21) describes Mennonite involvement in the drafting of the WCC statement on "responsibility to protect" vulnerable people. Finger fails to note—and likely was not aware of—the ongoing way in which WCC staff have sought counsel from Mennonites and other historic peace church representatives in drafting the language of this and other statements adopted by the WCC. It is important to note that Fernando Enns, a German Mennonite theologian, pastor and member of the WCC Central Committee, had shepherded the statement on "responsibility to protect" through several years of earlier drafts and was responsible for carrying it through the committee in a way that reflected as fully as possible the theological and practical concerns of pacifist Christians on this crucial topic.—*Nancy R. Heisey, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Pro-life means antiwar

I affirm the need for a consistent theology of life (Speaking Out, March 7). Since our context has many variables and misunderstandings, I offer an effort for clarity. As a follower of Jesus I wholeheartedly commit to being pro-life for all—for all times and all the time, including the unborn. I find no exception to that in the teaching and example of Jesus. Governments are not called to that theology or behavior. They are ordained of God to provide and maintain law and order. It's a call to governance that commends those who do good and, as we all know, deal otherwise with wrongdoers. I am grateful to God for this dual arrangement for justice and mercy.

As much as I wish governments would do a better job with justice, I wish even more that we who follow Jesus would not only be consistent in showing mercy but emulate the mercy of Jesus. Furthermore, he gave us a whole system of theology for life. If we became consistent with the whole gospel, the whole world might listen up—and become both pro-life and antiwar.—*Glenn Steiner, Sarasota, Fla.*

Sharing in worship

Re Arthur Paul Boers' article "Thank You for Zebra Mussels, Asian Ladybugs and Sharing?" Feb. 21): How can Boers call sharing a "non-native invader that distorts worship"? How many times can Boers find references to Jesus "teaching" (having church) when he was not interrupted to meet a need? Church with Jesus was never neatly polished, rehearsed and protected. Needy human beings made requests for healing, asked questions or, most disruptive of all, unashamedly praised and honored him. Does the Spirit need permission to be part of the service?

An article like Boers' challenges leadership to "clean up" the church service according to his standards. I hope the article is read the opposite way it was intended and people see the outcome of an "orchestrated" worship hour.

Personal sharing is not new to Christian worship. Jesus "shared" his feelings and needs with the disciples, and the disciples shared with each other. Does Boers honestly believe that when the Anabaptist forebears met in secret church services they didn't request prayer for each other? Maybe they even mentioned others who may not have been known by the rest of the "members" present.—*P. Lynn Peachey, Belleville, Pa.*

Thanks for the article regarding "sharing" during worship. Once again, Arthur Paul Boers has eloquently and truthfully written about a part of the church's life. I always enjoy his thoughtful comments. As a pastor, I have my own set of stories where sharing a prayer concern has pushed the edge of appropriateness. If the church followed Boers' guidelines for sharing, that part of worship might be redeemed.—*Larry Hauder, Boise, Idaho*

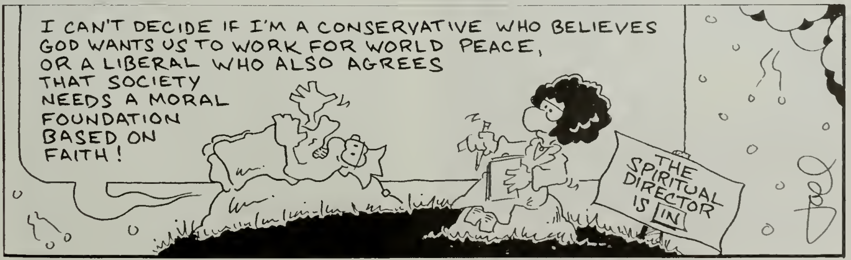
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Christian Peacemaker Teams "get in the way" of injustice. This is: (68 votes)

- ○ Appropriate for Mennonites (63%)
- ○ Not appropriate for Mennonites (15%)
- ○ Depends on the context (21%)
- ○ Not sure (1%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


I CAN'T DECIDE IF I'M A CONSERVATIVE WHO BELIEVES GOD WANTS US TO WORK FOR WORLD PEACE, OR A LIBERAL WHO ALSO AGREES THAT SOCIETY NEEDS A MORAL FOUNDATION BASED ON FAITH!
THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR IS IN

IN BRIEF

Sauder leaves Hesston College after 26 years

Wendell Sauder made many valuable contributions to Hesston (Kan.) College during the 26 years he served there. He resigned effective March 7 to take a teaching position at the Citation Jet training program at Flight Safety International's Cessna Learning Center located at Mid-Continent Airport in Wichita, Kan. Originally from Pettisville, Ohio, Sauder graduated from Hesston in 1975. Sauder taught aviation courses and advanced to being the program director before leaving in 1981. After three years of flying for the Bradbury Company in Moundridge, Kan., Sauder returned to again direct the aviation program at Hesston.—*Hesston College*

More cuts ahead for two mainline denominations

Noting a trend with no immediate end, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ have announced shortfalls in contributions, likely to mean cuts in national staff. The Presbyterians' General Assembly mission budgets must be cut to $9.15 million between this year and 2008. Year-end receipts to the UCC's headquarters were nearly $500,000 short of its 2005 budget of $10.5 million.—*The Christian Century*

MCC calls on U.N. to address Ugandan crisis

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has joined nine other international aid organizations in calling on the United Nations and the Ugandan government to respond to the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda.

For 20 years, a rebel group called the Lord's Resistance Army has terrorized northern Uganda by abducting children and forcing them to become child soldiers in a regional war. An estimated 25,000 children have been abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army, and more than 1.7 million people have been driven into displacement camps by the conflict.

In a written statement to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, MCC and other international aid organizations are calling for the U.N. Commission on Human Rights to appoint a special rapporteur to investigate human rights violations in Uganda and to adopt other measures in response to the conflict.

The statement also calls for the government of Uganda to ensure that people in displacement camps have adequate protection, water, sanitation, health care and freedom of movement.

The full text of the statement and information about MCC's work in Uganda are available at mcc.org/uganda.—*MCC*

Educator Sue Goerzen dies at age 80

Sue Goerzen (Nikkel), a longtime educator who served as co-chair of the Listening Committee for Homosexual Concerns in the early 1990s, died Jan. 14 in Harrow, Ont. She was 80.

A member of Harrow Mennonite Church, Goerzen was born May 23, 1925, in Corn, Okla. She taught 21 years at the University of Windsor (Ont.), where she received a University Teaching Excellence Award in 1990.

That same year, the General Boards of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church mandated the formation of a Listening Committee for Homosexual Concerns, on which Sue served as co-chair. She had just completed an eight-year stint as co-chair of a General Conference committee on human sexuality that helped draft the position paper "Human Sexuality in the Christian Life."—*Canadian Mennonite*

Mary Haarsager

Helping pregnant mothers in Sudan

Rebecca Yar Dhuol, a traditional birth attendant in southern Sudan, is helping save lives in her village by referring pregnant mothers to regional health centers when they need treatment.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Bluffton speaker addresses immigrant debate

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bringing the national debate over immigrant status to the Bluffton University campus, Baldemar Velasquez, founder and president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO (FLOC), presented "The Immigration Crisis: Beyond Borders" April 4. The presentation was one of a series of events during Bluffton's Justice Week, which focused on the plight of undocumented immigrants. The week was sponsored by Bluffton's PEACE Club.

Velasquez, a native of Texas who began migrant work alongside his family at age 6, painted a grim portrait of America should Congress pass legislation that would make felons out of the 12 million people residing illegally in the United States, of which 1.6 million are children.

Velasquez spoke about the government's "free trade" talk and how it is not consistent. "We don't place restrictions on commodities, products and money," he said. "Why are there restrictions on labor? We can't make an argument for free trade without allowing for free labor within that market."

Velasquez criticized President Bush's guest worker program, calling it "slave labor" that will not put the rights of workers before the profits of owners. He spoke about his involvement in getting the Campbell's Soup Co. and Mt. Olive Pickle Co. to provide benefits for their migrant workers, leading large strikes against the two companies. "When you impede a rich man's ability to make money, anything is negotiable," said Velasquez, referencing the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Velasquez pointed out that he has found 107 references in the Bible to "alien," and three themes are apparent in how people are to act toward them: "(1) Don't mistreat them, (2) govern them with the same laws as we govern ourselves, and (3) if they

aking ground for church and college in Hesston

Litwiller (left) and her father (Larry Litwiller) and Kylie man scoop up dirt to put in their containers following a breaking March 26 for members of Hesston (Kan.) nite Church. Construction began April 3 on a new $4.56 building for the church. The new building will include a t sanctuary considered shared space with Hesston which will use it for music performances, chapels and special events.—*Hesston College*

are mistreated we bring God's judgment upon us."—*Bluffton University*

Merry Lea dedicates finished green buildings

WOLF LAKE, Ind.—A windmill spins in the breeze atop its 100-foot tower; glycol oozes through pipes underground to and from ground source heat pump units; downspouts funnel water into a cistern for later use flushing toilets.

These are just a few of the environmentally friendly features that Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College celebrated April 8 when staff, students and supporters gathered to dedicate the first three of the seven buildings that will make up Rieth Village. The facility is designed to serve undergraduate students studying natural history, environmental education and agroecology.

Rieth Village was conceived and designed to meet the highest standards of the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system. LEED buildings are required to meet rigorous standards in areas such as energy efficiency, water management, use of recycled materials and indoor air quality. At present, no Indiana building has attained LEED certification, though several are in process.—*Goshen College*

CPTer arrested blocking weapons shipments

TUCSON, Ariz.—Five local members of Pledge of Resistance to the War in Iraq and Christian Peacemaker Teams Borderlands member Scott Kerr began a weapons blockade March 20 at Raytheon, a Tucson-area weapons manufacturer. The six peacemakers blocked the road for a half an hour before Sheriff's officers arrested them and carried them away.

"Smart bombs like the cruise missiles Raytheon develops and manufactures are for use in urban areas—these weapons terrorize whole communities," said Kerr, who was present in Baghdad during the initial 2003 bombing campaign.

On March 15, Raytheon announced the U.S. military had awarded it a military contract worth an estimated $346 million. The contract provides funding to manufacture 473 missiles, including 65 submarine torpedo Block IV Tomahawks.—*CPT*

Root and Branch meets Greenbelt festival

LONDON—They're interested in the world and like music, all kinds. They want to talk about ideas and haven't made up their minds yet.

For anyone hoping to make a difference in the world, the 20,000 or so people who attend Britain's prime Christian music festival every year represent an exciting demographic.

That's why a group of Anabaptist organizations quietly taking root throughout the United Kingdom recently met with a festival representative to talk about ways the groups can work together to reach those people more effectively.

The Anabaptist group, known as Root and Branch, was organized a little more than two years ago to bring together several distinct organizations and coordinate their efforts. It is the brainchild of Vic Thiessen, director of the London Mennonite Centre through Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

Root and Branch is a network that includes a Christian think tank, a Christian studies program, a group of conflict-mediation consultants, church-planting consultants, a church, peacemaker teams and a newsletter publisher, to name a few.

Root and Branch approached the Greenbelt arts festival in the hope of reaching a wider audience. With its ever-widening scope of artistic genres and events, the Greenbelt festival seemed a natural fit and represented a logical next step in growth for Root and Branch.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

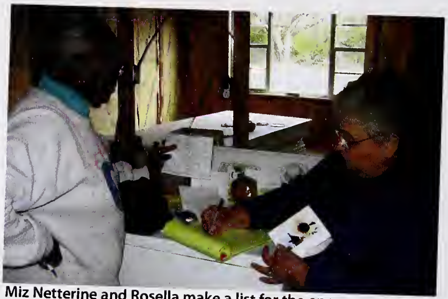
EMU to offer health-care leadership training

The Eastern Mennonite University board of trustees has approved two new health-care leadership programs within the master of arts in business administration program, beginning this fall. Allon Lefever, MBA director, says the health services administration program will prepare health-care managers with the requisite business and leadership skills for administering a variety of health-care settings. The new concentration has a wide reach in that courses will be offered online so that people won't have to relocate to the Harrisonburg, Va., campus, Lefever says. Students will have two study options. The first option is an MBA degree with an emphasis in health-care administration; the second is a graduate-level certificate in health-services administration consisting of five online courses.—*Eastern Mennonite University*

Big thaw coming

Global warming appears to be pushing vast reservoirs of ice on Greenland and Antarctica toward a significant, long-term meltdown. The world may have as little as a decade to take the steps to avoid this scenario. Those are the implications of new studies (see *Science*, March 24) that looked to climate history for clues about how the planet's major ice sheets might respond to human-triggered climate change.

Katrina *an*



Harold Regier

Miz Netterine and Rosella make a list for the encouragement fund distribution.

Harold Regier

'We are all fine': Gaynette Flowers Pugh makes gumbo for guests.

Harold Regier

Miz Netterine, Bert Moore and Rosella

Rubble from Hurricane Katrina

faith in action

During an Advent journey, we saw hope and trust in God in the voices, faces and stories of friends who survived Katrina.

by Rosella Wiens Regier and Harold Regier

Netterine Theodore from Gulfport, Miss., was on the phone. "I had been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights just before Katrina hit," she said. "I kept asking, Lord, why am I doing this? Then Hurricane Katrina came, and I knew. God was making me strong to endure. And Rosella, God is letting us go through this storm with joy. We'll make it. God has kept me strong. We had five feet of water in our house. Everything is ruined. But we're thankful to be alive. I'm a child of God, you know, and you Mennonites helped me grow in my faith so much."

We had five feet of water in our house. Everything is ruined. But we're thankful to be alive. I'm a child of God, you know, and you Mennonites helped me grow in my faith so much.—Netterine Theodore

Miz Netterine and her husband, Albert, live in the woodsy, country community of Turkey Creek, about five miles from the Gulf Coast at Gulfport. On the phone and later in person, we heard their haunting stories of destruction and despair, of safety and God's protection, during the Aug. 29, 2005, hurricane.

"We knew to leave our home that Sunday night before Katrina," Albert said. "The water rises here pretty fast because of the creek and the bayou. We were with relatives and slept, even though the wind picked up a good bit. But when we got home, everything was out of place."

"The water line was above my head," said Miz Netterine. "There was mud and silt all over everything."

Miz Gaynette Flowers Pugh—an 89-year-old matriarch of the African American community in North Gulfport—was the first to get through to us by phone after Katrina.

"I just want to ease your minds," she began. "We are all fine. My son-in-law and I drove to Birmingham to be with family during the storm. We came home to find loss of all services and damage to our trees, siding and roofs. Our sadness is that my sister-in-law died a few days after the storm because of limited medical services."

We share a strong history. These families are friends from when Mennonite Central Committee and the General Conference Mennonite Church had ministries in the African American communities of North Gulfport (1945-1978). We were part of that ministry in the 1960s—working toward the betterment of the community, helping provide spiritual nurture and building bridges in race relations.

We left parts of our hearts in Mississippi. Our friends told heart-breaking stories of

Continued on page 10

I looked out the door and saw a log floating past with a small turtle sitting on it. It was as if God was saying, 'This is what you need to do, get above the problem.'—Warren Howard

Continued from page 9

other friends, people whose lives will never be the same. Though we had lived through the terrifying Hurricane Camille in 1969, Katrina was much worse, with 30-foot tidal surges, sustained winds of 145 miles per hour, a storm 14 hours in duration. In the face of such a disaster, we knew we had to go back—to be with our friends, sit with them, hear their stories, share their pain and offer encouragement. We planned a trip during Advent.

When friends at our congregation, Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., heard we were going, the miracle of sharing began. One family sent the money they would have spent on Christmas gifts. A 4-H leader sent huge boxes of supplies for a needy school. Church friends gathered $3,300 in designated gifts. We turned these funds into gift cards for distribution to people trying to cope with the aftermath of the storm. "How do we deal with the responsibility of so many loving gifts?" we asked a church member. "Don't lead with the money." we were advised. "Find trusted friends to help you make decisions for distribution." They sent us on a mission of mercy with prayers, blessings and good wishes.

Miles of beautiful beachfront homes were rubble heaps. The houses that remained made Gulfport look like a blue-roofed city of tarps. Seventy miles north, uprooted trees and tangled forests showed Katrina's damage to nature. Mountains of trash emitted the stench of rubble. The faces and voices of people who had suffered pain and heartbreak, loneliness and frustration haunted us.

We experienced joy in sharing Faith's gifts. We found miracles of hope, resilience and strong faith in God. "Now don't you cry, Rosella," Miz Netterine said. "I haven't cried yet. We have to be strong. The Lord will see us through." Over an outdoor fire, she cooked delicious, fresh, speckled trout. As we ate the simple picnic on the cluttered carport, they shared their painful Katrina story and the miracle of all the help of the past months.

Another day, Miz Gaynette invited us to come eat shrimp and crab gumbo while we caught up on the news. "Let's catch hands," she instructed the five of us there. And she thanked God for "sending these friends who are like family, for leading them to come be with us in our hard times."

Eventually, Miz Netterine and Miz Gaynette made long lists of folks needing encouragement funds. During several days, they took us around to greet and meet people in more than 30 homes—new friends and old.

- Lottie Johnson, a tiny, frail woman, accepted the gift certificate with gratefulness and said, "Jesus knows this is good."
- Warren Howard got caught in his house when it flooded. He wrote: "When the water reached my thighs, I could think of nothing to do. I looked out the door and saw a log floating past with a small turtle sitting on it. It was as if God was saying, 'This is what you need to do, get above the problem.' So I flipped over the floating sofa and climbed on top, soon hanging on at the ceiling and praying. After hours, a man rescued me in a boat."
- Angie Steward, wearing work gloves, welcomed us with a big smile. "God bless," she said about the funds.
- Bert Moore told about all the flood damage and the progress with sheetrocking and thanked "all the good people coming around."
- "We're six of us here in this tiny trailer," Kim Thompson said. "It's crowded. This money will help so much. Where can I send a thank you note?"

Harold Regier

'We knew to leave our homes': Albert Theodore

- For Lettie Caldwell "life goes on, even when disasters strike," she said. Her husband died since Katrina.
- Veola Howard's yard was carefully cleaned and raked. Bound to a wheelchair, she lives with family members who care for her. She was grateful for the gift card. They enjoyed a story we remembered: "Years ago, when your grandson, Charles, was in one of my Bible classes," Rosella said, "I asked where Saul had been converted. Quick as a wink, he said, 'On the road to democracy.'"
- Elnora Theodore had to be rescued from her house when floodwater came to the top of the ceiling. She lives in a FEMA trailer, trying to decide what to do with the house that used to be home.
- Auntie Worter McGee is 98, a tiny woman with a huge sense of humor. When she received the envelope with funds, she grinned and said, "You so good."
- Edna Pittman's daughter Julie Ethel Berry cares for her bedridden mother in her home. She remembered the harrowing experience of Katrina. "I was alone and had Mama here to see to. So I dressed her warmly, set her in the wheelchair right by the door. The van was parked right there so I could wheel her out if I had to. I stood there and prayed, and I was so scared. I saw the trailer house explode right across the street. Our van lifted up off those wheels and I thought it would bang into the house. The wind like to never quit. I debated if I should go or stay. And then I got like a flash above the door. God said, 'Stay here.' But I'm tellin' you. I was scared."

Our faith was renewed. Day after day, we heard tales of terror and heartbreak, sad stories mingled with courage and faith, heartwarming stories of resilience and hope. Through the eyes and experiences of friends, our faith was strengthened and energized.

Roseann Jefferson summed it up when she quoted Proverbs 3:5-6 in the King James Version: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways, acknowledge him, and he will direct thy path."

That's putting heart and hands and feet to faith in God. It is the challenge that lingers still as we reflect on the overwhelming and long-term needs of victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Rosella Wiens Regier and Harold Regier are members of Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Harold Regier

Peppernuts are a hit

We took four pounds of peppernuts to Mississippi to share as hostess gifts. Wrapped in smaller cellophane packages, they were a big hit. At the Theodores', Miz Netterine remembered when I used to make them in the 1960s. Esther Horst said I gave her some at that time also. Eugene Schlabach had never heard of them but recognized the anise aroma, since that's the scent he puts up in trees to trap bears and squirrels back in Virginia.—*Rosella Wiens Regier*

A new look at the parable of the talents

As a child I was known for hiding my money. When my parents moved off the farm, some 20 years after I had left home, they found a box of my hard-earned babysitting money from my teen years in the freezer. We joked about my frozen assets.

As far as I'm concerned, a blue chip has to do with corn. It's no surprise that I'm uneasy with the usual interpretation of The Investment Parable, commonly known as The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-27).

Jesus told this parable before the stock market, before investment economics and before talents denoted anything other than money.

Because of their story form, parables are invariably open to varying interpretations. Jesus used parables so that our ears could hear things we might otherwise miss. What are we to catch from this story? Are we to hear that venture capitalism is virtuous? Are we to notice that God doesn't like slackers? Are we to learn that those who hide their assets are troublemakers? Or if we are to ponder judgement, whose judgement?

The pieces of this story seem to have become bent with time. They are not easily put together. Matthew and Luke use the story in different ways. The man going on the journey (Matthew) or the nobleman (Luke) is often assumed to be the God figure. If this is the case, then we are left trying to piece in the third servant's negative description of him. Fearing God we can understand, but fearing God because he interrogates his servants and ruthlessly gains wealth leaves us confused. We also can't smoothly connect the master expecting his workers to make mounds of money with Jesus' upside-down priorities.

Jesus told this parable before the stock market, before investment economics and before talents denoted anything other than money. Rethinking this parable with Jesus' audience in mind may help us unravel the puzzle.

In all likelihood there were peasants hearing this story. Richard Rohrbaugh's "A Peasant Reading of the Parable of the Talents" helps us realize how different peasant thinking is from ours. His explanation of "limited good" opens a window into the peasant perception. Peasants held that the desired things in life, such as land, wealth, status and power, were finite. There was no way to increase the available quantities. The pie was limited. Rohrbaugh writes, "A larger share for one automatically means a smaller share for someone else" (*Biblical Theology Bulletin*, Spring 1993). If I increase my wealth, someone else gets poorer.

The peasant produced things not for the creation of wealth but for the maintenance of family and well-being of the village. Traders amassed wealth; peasants did not. The peasant sold crops in order to buy necessities. The trader bought crops to sell at a profit. The goal for the peasant was a stable society, thus lucrative trading, exorbitant tax collecting and charging interest were understood as dishonorable, evil exploitations and disrupting the economic balance.

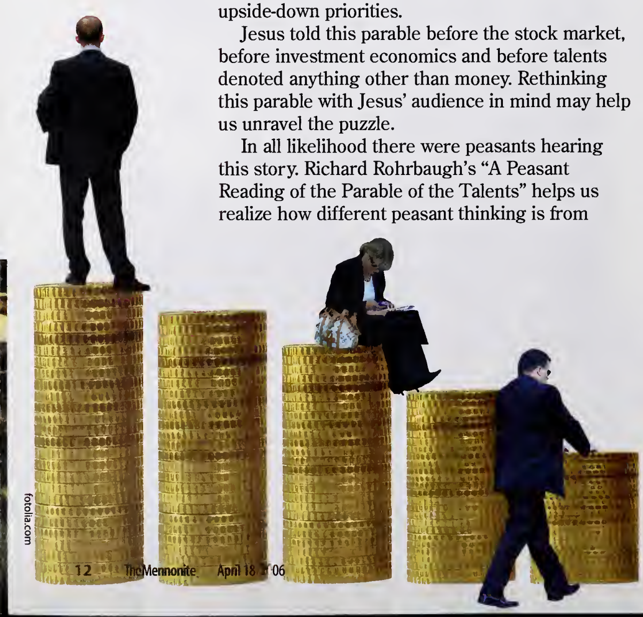
The Jewish peasant in Jesus' audience also would have been familiar with the Torah. He knew the story of manna. He could smell the rotted, wormy bread of those who had gathered too much (Exodus16:16-20). He knew that under the law charging interest on loans was illegal (Leviticus 25:36-37, Deuteronomy 23:19-20).

Some in Jesus' audience had surely heard about him. Wasn't he the one who had said that the poor are blessed? Didn't he teach his followers to lend expecting nothing in return (Luke 6: 34-35). Hadn't he told the story of Mr. Bigger Barns (Luke 12:13-21)? Surely they heard of Zacchaeus, whose story Luke tells just before the parable? Everyone seemed to know that Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus prompted him to give half his possessions to the poor and pay back four times those he defrauded.

If we return to the parable with Jewish peasant ears, events sound different. As the story opens we hear about this wealthy master who is off on a long journey, not just any journey but, Matthew tells us, a journey "to get royal power for himself." He has power but wants more. This character is familiar to our peasant ears, and he is no hero.

Matthew tells us that he left five talents with the first servant, two with the second and one with the third. Our peasant mouths gasp. What kind of person has that much money?

The talent, an amount of silver weighing between 57 and 74 pounds, was one of the largest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The parab

by Jane Yoder-Short

units of money in the Hellenistic world. One talent was equal to 6,000 denarii. (See *Hear Then the Parable* by Bernard Brandon Scott.) This is like 15 years wages. Our peasant ears associate anyone handing out this kind of money with suspicious business practices.

When the master returns, the servants are then summoned "so that he might find out what they had gained by trading." As peasants we know about traders. They make money by speculating on our future crops. They loan money at high interest rates. If our crop is short, they foreclose and take the land. They then make even more money by hiring laborers to farm cash crops.

When we hear of the first two servants' 100 percent return, we aren't cheering. These servants have merely succeeded in getting more than their share of the limited pie. They, like their master, have learned to take what they did not deposit and reap where they did not sow. How honest is that? The first two servants have joined the ranks of the ruthless economic domination.

Enter the third servant, the one who kept the money safe. Exodus holds that if your neighbor gives you money for safe keeping, you are responsible if it is stolen (Exodus 22:7). According to rabbinic law, the proper way to keep money safe was to bury it (Rohrbaugh). Wrapping it in a cloth was riskier, but the money was safe. The third servant succeeded. He acted faithfully and ethically, but he faces his master with fear. Sitting in the peasant section, we taste the third servant's fear. We, too, have been berated by someone who holds the strings to our well-being.

The third servant is a truthteller: "I knew you were a harsh man," he says. The third servant becomes what William Herzog calls a "whistle-blower," unmasking the master's greed and the toil on others (*Parables as Subversive Speech*).

He doesn't want the money: "Here take your money." He doesn't want to be part of the system of greed that tramples on others.

The master doesn't try to defend his action by saying he is not harsh or that he hasn't reaped where he shouldn't have. Instead he verbally attacks the servant and calls him "evil and lazy." Calling truthtellers names is a usual response.

With peasant ears this third servant becomes the hero. He is honest. He acknowledges himself to be afraid but still acts. He is creatively subordinate. He kept his master's money as the law required but refused to be part of the master's thievery.

Listening with peasant ears opens the story to new ways of hearing for our time. We can imagine The Traveling CEO.

A CEO of a large investment firm went on a global tour to broaden his range of corporate ties. He summoned his employees. "While I am gone I want you to invest my billions." To each he gave $10 billion.

The first employee, wanting to impress his boss, used his connections to invest in multinational corporations. Sure, they paid slave wages in Third World countries, and perhaps some of the workers were underage, but their profits were impressive.

Being part of God's kingdom is risky. Being a risk taker is about more than investing money.

The second invested in energy conglomerates. She looked the other way when her portfolio's mining company was cited for violations. She ignored the environmental impact of her large oil company's drilling methods. She was able to make unprecedented profits for the company.

The third investor had trouble sleeping at night. He had been educated at a Mennonite college and was uneasy with his employer's business practices. He decided to loan the entire amount to a fair-trade association. They used the money to start a number of small agricultural cooperatives in distressed areas.

When the CEO returned and looked over the employees' portfolios, the two that had turned big profits received promotions.

The third approached the CEO shaking with fear, but he told the truth. "Your business practices are hurting people. I decided to take a different approach." He happily reported that his interest-free loan had been returned and could be used again. When the CEO realized what he had done, the third employee was fired.

Being part of God's kingdom is risky. Being a risk taker is about more than investing money. Let's be open to hearing beyond the noise of our culture's greedy clamor. We can and do find creative ways to release our frozen assets and use our talents in risky ways that proclaim the truth. Talents and parables are not to be wasted on what may turn smelly and wormy.

Jane Yoder-Short is a member at East Union Mennonite Church, Iowa.

# of the traveling CEO

Are we getting in the way of what God wants to do?

More than 50 years ago, two different stories in the heart of South America helped shape the world, as the seeds for Mennonite mission and a Cuban revolutionary were planted.

Motorcycle Diaries: Two young men embarked on an adventure through South America. The film *The Motorcycle Diaries* tells their engaging story, as Ernesto Guevara and Alberto Granado leave Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1951 on an overloaded motorcycle they called "El Poderoso" (The Mighty One) for a three-month adventure that became a six-month journey. These young men just wanted to see more of the world and have fun. We watch their eyes open as their adventure intersects with the harsh reality of the lives of others. At one point they visit an indigenous couple who has been forced from their land by landowners and now depend on occasional work for a large mining company. The world no longer makes sense to Ernesto and Alberto.

Toward the end of their journey, Ernesto and Alberto help for several weeks at the San Pablo leprosy colony in Peru. To get there, they travel for several days on a river in the Amazon Basin, leaving from Pucallpa on a commercial boat, wondering as another boat of indigenous people is towed behind. They encounter more separation at the Catholic mission at San Pablo. Medical workers and mission staff live on one side of the river. As they traverse the river for each day's work with those afflicted with leprosy, workers put on gloves to keep themselves clean (even though leprosy is not contagious). The mission maintains a neat separation between the mission workers and those they minister to. Ernesto struggles with what he experiences as the same division and injustice in the church as he has seen outside the church. As they celebrate Ernesto's birthday at the farewell the night before their departure, Ernesto finally can't take it anymore and jumps into the river, risking his life to swim to his leper friends on the other shore. As Ernesto reflects in his diary at the end of his trip, "Ya no soy yo" ("I am no longer myself; at least not the me I used to be").

Mennonite mission: At the same time, not far away, in the northern Argentine Chaco, a Mennonite mission to the Toba indigenous group established in 1943 struggled. Like the river that separated the mission workers from those they ministered to at San Pablo, North American Mennonite missionaries worked from a classical mission compound, showing little fruit for their labors, frustrated. Simultaneously and independently of Mennonite mission effort, a religious awakening among the Toba mushroomed. As the missionaries learned what was happening, their frustration deepened. In 1954, an evaluation team confirmed their sobering realization that they needed to get out of the way of what God was doing.

And they did. The mission workers began a creative, courageous strategy that brought down the mission compound and did not seek denominational proselytizing but encouraged the development of the indigenous church through Bible translation and leadership training. This resulted in the "unusual birth and growth of an authentically indigenous church" still supported by Mennonite mission workers, though in a way different from what had been imagined 50 years earlier.

A Toba religious leader reflected on the challenge to be both Toba and Christian: "Come stay with us, not for a short cross-cultural experience—make it a lifetime commitment; be good listeners; accompany us in recovering our cultural values, especially the language; teach the Bible in such a way as not to fracture the life process of the indigenous people."

Mennonite church in Bolivia: Sometimes the Spirit works in unexpected ways. A pastor of a Mennonite church in Bolivia says, "the Bolivian Mennonite Church did not begin as the result of

In 1954, an evaluation team confirmed the Mennonite missionaries' sobering realization that they needed to get out of the way of what God was doing. And they did.

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Listening to the

planning … but because of the presence of Mennonite Central Committee and its volunteers."

Leonidas Saucedo, one of the pastors in the Bolivian Mennonite Church who came to Christ as a young person in one of the rural Bolivian communities where MCC worked, says: "When MCC began its community development work, the volunteers had contact with the people through their service and social action but also testifying with their lives that they were serving in the name of Christ. … As a result, people began to meet with the MCC volunteers in small Bible study groups. This occurred around 1970, when almost no family had a Bible in their home because the only person who was able to interpret the Bible was the priest. As a result, the people met with the MCC volunteers simply to be able to hear the reading of the Bible. This was the first stage of what became the mission of the Bolivian Evangelical Mennonite Church."

The churches and conference developed with the help of mission workers, and MCC continues to work closely with this conference of Mennonite churches in Bolivia.

Listening to the Spirit: In the 1950s, Mennonite missionaries listened and changed, a transformation that Toba leaders attribute to the Holy Spirit. In the 1970s, the Spirit worked in unexpected ways when churches in Bolivia emerged from integrated community development work. How do we listen to the Holy Spirit today?

In 1 Samuel 3:1-10, God spoke to Samuel, but Samuel thought it was Eli speaking. Three times Samuel went to Eli to ask what he wanted, until Eli finally told Samuel to listen for the Lord. Finally, when Samuel realized God was calling him for the fourth time, he asked the Lord to "speak, for your servant is listening." It took the nudging of Eli before Samuel finally realized that the Lord was calling him and he was able to listen.

Isaiah was ready and responded with, "Here am I. Send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Sometimes God speaks in a whisper, as to Elijah in 1 Kings 19:12. In Luke 2:41-52, when Jesus stayed behind at the Temple sitting among the teachers, "everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding." What caused their amazement, Jesus' teaching or preaching? No, Jesus was "listening to them and asking them questions." Listening and asking questions showed his understanding. And even Jesus grew in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52).

Views from outside: *The Motorcycle Diaries* doesn't show what became of San Pablo, but we do know that Ernesto "Che" Guevara became a revolutionary with close ties to Fidel Castro in Cuba. He led an armed uprising in South America and was ultimately killed in 1967 near Valle Grande, Bolivia. Seeing the same divisions and injustice in the church that he saw outside the church turned Che away; such a view also leads to the Marxist claim that the church is no more than an opiate of the people. In contrast, the same kinds of divisions, when broken down, led to the revitalization of the Toba church.

From similar situations came vastly different stories. What stories are our churches telling? Do rivers or walls separate the church from its mission? What does the church look like to those not involved? Does it draw them in, or push them away? Are we getting in the way of what God is trying to do? How do we partner with churches in other countries? How well can we swim? What does it mean to be a missional church as demographics change around us? How do we proclaim, "Here I am, Lord"? If we take the concept of the priesthood of believers seriously, how do we listen to the ever-increasing Spanish and Hmong and other voices among us?

What does it mean to be a missional church as demographics change around us?

Here we are, Lord: It is a humble statement of faith to ask, as did Samuel, for God to "speak, for your servant is listening," or as did Isaiah, "Here am I; send me." *Hymnal: A Worship Book* includes the song "Here I am, Lord" (#395):

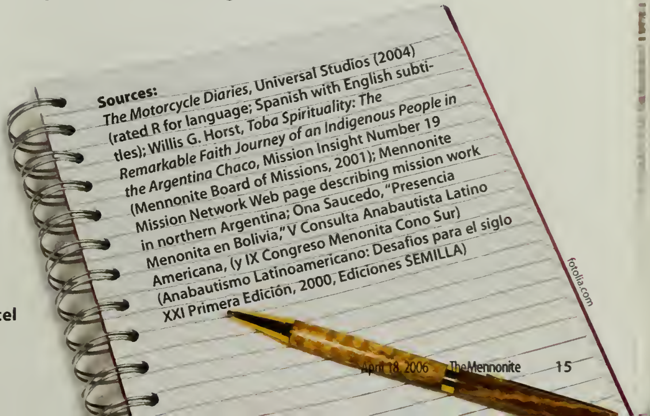
"Here we are, Lord.
Is it us, Lord?
We have heard you calling in the night.
We will go, Lord, if you lead us.
We will hold your people in our heart."

May we listen and hear.

Barry C. Bartel is a member of Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo. This article is adapted from a sermon he gave there.

Spirit

by Barry C. Bartel



Sources:
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together
■ sharing all of
Christ
with all of creation

PART 6 OF AN EIGHT-PART SERIES

Reversing the paradigm

by Ryan Miller

During each biennial visit to central Illinois, the Argentine leaders asked their hosts the same question, "Can you show us your missions?"

Illinois Arm in Arm congregations and southern Argentina churches took turns hosting the annual trips as part of a Patagonia mission partnership. In North America, the Illinois group showed their visitors church members involved in other churches' prison ministry programs, volunteers working for parachurch organizations and positive social service efforts that existed in the community.

"No," the Argentines finally said, "show us your missions."

"We didn't have anything," says Michael Dean, East Bend Mennonite Church's pastor. "Nothing that we were doing on our own."

For generations, many Westerners have seen mission as their domain—bringing the light of Christ to the outer regions of the world. Today global mission workers are reversing the paradigm.

Mennonite Mission Network supports international churches in sending workers originating from nearly a dozen non-Western countries. A few now are ministering to North Americans in need of the gospel or of a new vision.

In April 2005, a handful of leaders from the East Bend and Hopedale Mennonite churches and Illinois Mennonite Conference sat around tables at a Mount Vernon, Ill., Subway restaurant, praying for the community. They were hours from their homes, on their way to explore beginning a ministry somewhere in the southern part of Illinois.

Within the group was Juan Sieber, a pastor from Patagonia. Sieber was in the midst of a year-and-a-half period mentoring Illinois churches—essentially teaching them about mission.

Sieber's church in Choele Choel, Argentina, had broken away from only using its main church building, divided church members into geographic zones and started ministries within each area—day care, mentoring, meals for children and plenty of prayer meetings. They asked the Holy Spirit to transform their communities and connect them with others receptive to their message of salvation.

The Choele Choel church grew as members related to their neighbors in new ways. It expanded one relationship at a time through their communities. Some might say it expanded all the way into Illinois.

Sieber's church was part of the Patagonia partnership, established around decades-old connections between Illinois and Argentina congregations with the help of Mennonite Mission Network. While Argentina Anabaptists initially emerged from North American mission efforts, a relationship change was in order.

Sieber says, "We feel the mother church has something to learn from her daughters."

His commission was a period of teaching and encouraging across Illinois. Some listeners resisted the message, according to Wayne Hochstetler, conference minister for Illinois Mennonite Conference. After all, why would an Argentina mission strategy work in the United States?

"Juan's response was that (mission) is not a matter of cultural context. It's a matter of faithfulness," Hochstetler says. The partnership, he adds, allowed Illinois leaders to rethink their tasks with creativity and imagination.

The Southern Illinois Mission Partnership emerged. They initially used the same acronym—SIMP—but called it a project instead of a partnership. That changed.

The Patagonia Mission Project partnership consists of Arm in Arm (a group of Illinois Mennonite Conference individuals and congregations), Iglesia Evangélica Menonita de Argentina (Argentina Mennonite Church), Iglesia Menonitas de la Patagonia (Argentine Mennonite Church, southern zone) and Mennonite Mission Network. The South Africa partnership includes Breakthru Church International, Calvary Community Church of Hampton, Va., Mennonite Mission Network and Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions.

Striking out and praying: A group of the faithful from Argentina, central Illinois and Mount Vernon communities gathered Oct. 1, 2005, to dedicate a Mount Vernon property to ministry.

"A project implies going down, doing something and leaving," Dean says. In southern Illinois, the leaders always intended to remain long-term, working with the movements God started. But any collaboration not only needed to be ongoing but Spirit-led.

"If this is going to be from God, there needs to be that sense of faith in what happens," Dean says. "Otherwise it's just a bunch of guys getting together to do good."

Dean says North Americans tend to create order and make plans, perhaps because they are often wealthy enough (financially and culturally) to rely on their own resources to accomplish their goals. Sieber, like Ranchod, counseled trusting God to provide the details.

They identified southern Illinois as a place with little Anabaptist presence, then left the rest to God.

"This was striking out and praying," Nachtigall says.

So the group stopped to eat and pray in fast-food restaurants on their way south. They prayed for each community and for the grace to follow God's will. Following prayers at the Mt. Vernon Subway, Hochstetler talked with an individual who was eating alone. The man mentioned a couple in the community ministering through a small house church. Later the group met with the city manager, and the same couple's names came up.

The group made contact and explained their vision to support a ministry outreach. The couple responded with tears in their eyes—for a decade they had prayed for someone to help in ministry.

The partnership now has purchased property with a vision to build a simple building—space for a meeting place but primarily for a residence that eventually will be filled by a mission family. The leaders also hope Mt. Vernon becomes a mission training center, a place to equip and educate missionaries in the SIMP ministry. As other congregations volunteer with the SIMP group in Mt. Vernon, they can see how the relational approach brought from Argentina can be used in any community.

In the meantime, Sieber has returned to Argentina, though he hopes to be back in Illinois in 2007.

"We needed Juan to stimulate our thinking and our imagination. We needed him to demonstrate how missions could take place," Hochstetler says. "I think Juan would be offended if he heard us saying we needed him to keep it going."

Ryan Miller is news director for Mennonite Mission Network.

South Africa comes to Virginia

Flinn Ranchod had a vision. From his home with Breakthru Church International in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, he and Karen, his wife, felt called to plant a church but did not know where. Connections with Stanley Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, provided a mission field in Virginia.

Through the Tidewater ministry plan of Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va., the Ranchods trained with Bishop Leslie Francisco and began their own ministry in nearby Chesapeake.

"The gospel covers every culture," Ranchod says. "I believe God is giving other nations the chance to impact the world."

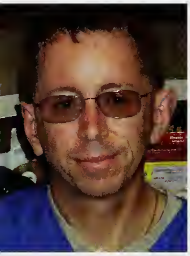
Breakthru pastor Russell Toohey says the South African church also has sponsored workers in Madagascar, Zambia, Tanzania and Ukraine. Mission Network appointees Christine and Phil Lindell Detweiler recently began a term in Pietermaritzburg, continuing the relationship.

"We are totally convinced of the need, power and priority of missions. There can be no doubt of God's heart for missions," Toohey says. "What's important to God is important to us.

"The Calvary connection has opened the doors to other relationships with Americans—relationships that have been a great mutual blessing," Toohey says.

Francisco says the partnership that allowed for Ranchod's presence helps Virginia Anabaptists broaden their understanding of church while keeping Christ at the center of their ministry. Ranchod's presence, and the partnership between nations and mission agencies, is the embodiment of the Great Commission.—*Ryan Miller*

Singled in or singled out?



Steve Koenig attends James Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Living single in the Mennonite Church has been a frustrating experience for me. Many times I felt a warm welcome, and other times I felt like a misfit and wondered what the best place for me was, like when I heard, "Hmmm. What Sunday school class should we put you in?" or, "I wonder which of our small groups would fit you best?"

After graduating from college in 1993, I lived in Alabama five years. During this time, there were two exceptional moments. The first was a singles retreat that I believe was sponsored by Gulf States Mennonite Conference. The second was the Mennonite Church convention in Philadelphia in 1993. In both experiences, I met many neat singles who became good friends. Yet over time, the friendships passed. It seemed we all ended up on different paths that God planned for us.

After much prayer and discernment, I decided to try a new place. I knew many people in Virginia and settled there in 1998. When I arrived, I scoped the area for churches that had singles because I wanted to belong, wanted friends and was tired of doing things on my own. Thankfully I found a church with a wonderful singles group of about 15 people. I was overwhelmed with gratitude. It was so nice to go to a church that had a Sunday school class just for us. It helped me feel like part of the congregation.

But again, as time marched on, the friendships passed, this time because singles became couples and couples became families and again I felt like I didn't fit.

After this experience, I tried singles groups in the area. One was called Christian Singles. For a while that was a fun group to be with, but I didn't develop the deep friendships I hoped for.

Also during this time, I began wondering if there were any other singles groups in Mennonite Church USA. So one day I borrowed my friend's directory, wrote down the names of all the conferences in Mennonite Church USA and sent letters to their leaders to find out what other conferences were doing for singles. Overall I was disappointed with the response. While I learned that a few congregations had groups for singles, there did not appear to be anything organized for singles at the conference or churchwide level beyond the occasional retreat.

> While a few congregations had groups for singles, there did not appear to be anything organized for singles at the conference or churchwide level beyond the occasional retreat.

Because some singles I've met want to be married and have a family, I even wrote to Mennonite publications about placing a personal ad. There answer was no. Was I surprised? No. I see them as family-focused, not singles-focused. Why is that? I urge them to change.

It's amazing to me that publications, like most churches and conferences, tend to focus on the model of the family. They make room for families and youth groups, yet singles do not seem to have a place. Sometimes I ask, do we count? Do we fit? Is ministry to singles an area Mennonite Church USA should be looking at? Do churches know how to minister to singles?

In recent years I have continued to experience small successes, often accompanied by frustration. Things seemed to take a good turn recently when I decided during my prayer time to open my heart and pray for a Mennonite/Christian singles group begin in my area. The lead pastor of my church joined with me in prayer. Together we saw a vision for a singles ministry in the conference. This group has not formed yet, but I am still hoping someday it will.

These are my ideas and goals. I would be glad to hear from singles in Mennonite Church USA. And I'd be glad to hear from the leadership of the church as well. I want to know what your churches are doing for singles. Thank you for reading my journey. My email is sfkoenig@dejazzd.com.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Anabaptists and Mennonites**—Walter Klaassen
- **Anabaptism and pastoral authority**—Heather Ann Ackley
- **The Anabaptist faith**—Ted Grimsrud

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Cheyenne, Arapaho, Mennonite journey

Conference celebrates and reviews historic relationship and faith stories.

When Lawrence Hart, a Mennonite pastor and Cheyenne peace chief, visited the Limmat River site near Zurich where early Anabaptist leader Felix Manz was drowned, he remembered another of his spiritual ancestors, Black Kettle.

Hart told the story as he stood on the banks of another river, the Washita in western Oklahoma, where Black Kettle—also a peace chief—died, shot down by members of the Seventh Cavalry under the leadership of General George Armstrong Custer on Nov. 27, 1868. Standing around Hart were participants in a conference sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA, "Cheyenne, Arapaho, Mennonite: Journey from Darlington."

The March 30-April 2 conference celebrated and reviewed the historic relationship and faith stories of American Indian people and Mennonites. The General Conference Mennonite Church initiated the first Mennonite mission in 1880, when Samuel and Susanna Haury went to the Darlington Indian Agency school near El Reno in what was then Indian Territory.

According to Hart, 2006 is the 110-year anniversary of the founding of the first Indian Mennonite church. The official date is 1898, when the first solid walls went up, Hart said. But he and his wife, Betty E., date the founding of the church from 1896, when M.M. Horsch began holding services in brush arbors along the Washita River and Turtle Creek. All the plenary sessions of the conference except for the journey to the Washita massacre site and a building dedication took place in the exhibit hall at the Frisco Conference Center in Clinton, Okla., where the speakers stood onstage under a small brush arbor meant to commemorate those early days of Mennonite mission.

Raylene Hinz-Penner, an English faculty member at Washburn University in Topeka, Kan., gave the conference's opening address. She spent the last four years interviewing Hart and writing *Searching for Sacred Ground: The Journey of Lawrence Hart, Mennonite*, to be published in November by Cascadia Publishing.

Despite vast differences in Mennonite and Cheyenne culture and experiences, Hinz-Penner said, "the peace tradition of the Cheyenne-Arapaho people seemed to confirm the destiny of these two peoples to meet on the Great Plains.

One plenary speaker, Clyde Ellis, professor of history at Elon (N.C.) University who has done extensive work with Kiowa-Apache-Comanche life and culture in southern Oklahoma, said Christian missionaries and their work helped the Indians, who were being forced onto reservations under President U.S. Grant's "peace policy" of the late 1800s, to "find avenues for respect, influence and leadership." The church helped to nurture a sense of community and identity among Indian peoples, he said. They came to Christianity with strong spiritual/religious traditions, and the Kiowa, Apaches and Comanches, at least, found "the Jesus way a good way for Indians to travel" and doing so didn't "necessarily mean giving up all Indian-ness."

Conference participants visited the site of the Washita massacre of 1868, which Hart was instrumental in having declared a national historic site in 1997 and, the next day, took part in the dedication of the Return to the Earth repatriation and reburial site at the Cheyenne Cultural Center just outside Clinton. Return to the Earth is a project whereby Mennonite Central Committee and 70 other faith-based groups will assist in burying Indian remains declared to be "culturally unidentifiable" in one of four regional cemeteries around the country. One of these, and the first to be dedicated, will be located on the property of the Cheyenne Cultural Center.

Participants took a Return to the Earth study guide, and Mennonite congregations are encouraged to provide prayer support, financial gifts and help build the square cedar boxes that will hold the remains.—*Melanie Zuercher*

John Sharp

John Gaeddert (left) created a buffalo head sculpture that he presented to Lawrence Hart (right) during the "Cheyenne, Arapaho, Mennonite: Journey from Darlington" conference March 30-April 2, in Clinton, Okla. It symbolizes Gaeddert's high regard for Lawrence, his ministry and Cheyenne culture. The buffalo is also the logo for the Cheyenne Cultural Center, where the sculpture will be displayed.

Symposium calls for passionate church

Speaker asks, Do we practice the kind of faith we want our youth to have?

Mary E. Klassen

Energy: Lana Miller (left), a student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and Tonia Martin (to her left), a staff member of Mennonite Mission Network, participate in a table discussion at the Youth Ministry Symposium.

About 130 people passionate about youth ministry gathered March 22-24 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., to think theologically about Anabaptist youth ministry. Participants met with keynote speaker Kenda Creasy Dean, associate professor of youth, church and culture at Princeton Theological Seminary, to learn about "Youth and the Quest for the Passionate Church."

AMBS, Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg and Goshen (Ind.) College collaborated to host this Youth Ministry Symposium. Table talks, speeches from participants, group discussions and addresses by Dean helped participants think about being a more passionate church and work at "more serious Anabaptist theological studies for youth ministry practitioners," said Randy Keeler, assistant professor of religion at Bluffton (Ohio) University.

Dean said that salvation for teenagers is "someone who loves them passionately." Youth are on a quest for a passionate God. She listed three dimensions of divine passion: fidelity, transcendence and communion. If youth do not realize Jesus is the source of passion, Dean said, they may find fidelity in gangs, transcendence in drugs, and communion in sex.

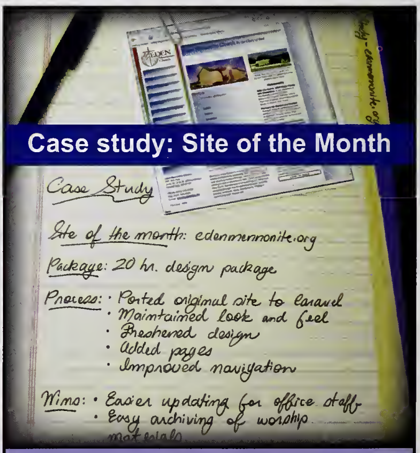
Dean described the religion of youth as Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD), a mentality in which religion helps youth do good, feel good and involves a God that stays out of the way until needed. In order to counteract MTD, she suggested four foundations of faith: (1) a grammar of faith of the God they worship, (2) a community to belong to, (3) a call to live out and (4) a hope to hold onto. She asked, "Do we practice the kind of faith we want our youth to have?"

Dean said: "The point is not their passion. It's about getting kids connected to God's passion—God's fidelity, transcendence and communion." To help understand this passion, she talked about the "dance of doubt with Jesus," which embraces vulnerability, risks change and surrenders to grace because of the opportunity to fail.

According to Andy Brubacher Kaethler, youth ministry instructor at AMBS, the gathering of practitioners from different settings was one of the strengths of the symposium. Through table-group discussions, participants identified additional themes important in the settings where they work, including community, the life of Jesus and his resurrection, discipleship and service.

"The energy that this group has together will bear a lot of fruit," Dean said. "This shows that youth ministry doesn't belong to part of the church. It belongs to everybody."

"I've done a lot more networking than I expected," said Mark Horst, a first-year student studying youth ministry at Hesston (Kan.) College. "The future of youth ministry is promising because of how much passion there is in this group."—*Sarah Rohrer for AMBS*



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Goshen students reach across cultures

'Peace of the Arts' program offers after-school opportunities for at-risk youth.

After a 2005 gang shooting in Goshen, Ind., members of the local community and Goshen College faculty sought to examine issues surrounding violence in society, and attempted to find a way to encourage young people to find healthy alternatives.

Sonny Carreño, director of the college's Lavender Jazz band, formed an idea of a program that would entertain and teach youth by combining an after-school curriculum with the arts.

Odelet Nance, director of multicultural affairs, expanded on Carreño's idea and proposed the program "Peace of the Arts." Nance advocated the need for an alternative after-school program to "cultivate self-esteem, intercultural dialogue and awareness" through students' participation in either the performing arts or visual art workshops.

Students from Goshen middle and high schools did photography, free-lance drawing, collage-making, performance poetry and short essay writing. The weekly workshops focused on different themes on which the students based their work.

The youth met on five Wednesdays in January and February on the Goshen campus to discuss sexism, racism and classism and how their lives have been affected by different forms of oppression. Discussions prompted analysis and reflections intended to help students identify with each other and promote understanding through communication and peacemaking.

"It was more successful than I could have imagined," says Nance.

David Martinez, a sophomore communication major from Goshen, worked as a volunteer mentor for the program. "I developed meaningful relationships," he says.

The program also hired student assistants from the college to work with the kids in their workshops. Morgan Kraybill, a first-year social work and peace, justice and conflict studies major from Harrisonburg, Va., says, "Developing relationships with the kids is what gave me energy … their laughs, smiles and involvement made the hard work worth it."

Since the majority of participants were Latino ESL students from Goshen middle and high schools, the program gave the college students an opportunity to learn about another culture.

When Hillary Watson, a sophomore Bible and religion major from Seattle, got involved with the program, she found the language barrier a challenge. "I once tried to explain my struggle to an older kid [and said], 'I recognize the words when someone speaks, but I can't make sense of them in my head,'" she says. "The student replied, 'I know what you mean,' and it wasn't until then I realized I wasn't the only person struggling to be bilingual."

According to Nance, the Peace of the Arts program will be offered again during the spring semester of 2007. Next year's program will expand in length and include guest speakers yet continue the concentration of enabling students to explore their creativity while promoting peaceful ways of dealing with conflict.—*Emily Dougherty, from* The Record

Rhoda Keener

Prayer shawls help knit together lives of Gulf States woman

Rebecca Sommers, board president for Mennonite Women USA, gives a prayer shawl to Dot Miller, president of Gulf States Mennonite Women, during MW USA's annual resource gathering for leaders in Sarasota, Fla., Feb. 24-25. The shawl was knit with yarn and prayers to show solidarity for Hurricane Katrina victims. At this year's annual meeting, called "Preparing, Resourcing, Encouraging, Praising," 35 MW USA conference leaders met to garner resources for their work with women. On the table next to Sommers and Miller is a gift bag with 185 gift cards, in amounts of $10 and $20, for Miller to take back with her to share in Gulf States. These will be distributed by the leaders in Gulf States Conference and Mennonite Central Committee.—*Laurie Oswald Robinson*

MCC photo

Mennonite volunteers Deborah Retno, left, and Amanda Sisilia help clean up after a flash flood damaged Tayu Hospital in Indonesia on March 20.

Indonesian Mennonite hospital damaged

Indonesian Mennonites and Mennonite Central Committee provide assistance.

Tayu Christian Hospital, a Mennonite hospital in Central Java, Indonesia, was badly damaged in a flash flood on March 20.

More than three feet of muddy water and debris swept onto the hospital's first floor, destroying medical equipment and supplies and driving 66 patients into a second story meeting room.

In the weeks that followed, a dozen groups of Mennonite volunteers helped with cleanup, such as shoveling mud out of the entrance to the emergency room.

They came from two Indonesian Mennonite conferences—Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa (Evangelical Church of Java) and Persatuan Gereja Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (Muria Christian Church in Indonesia).

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing Tayu Hospital with $36,500 to replace medical equipment, including a defibrillator and two neonatal incubators.

MCC is also shipping two 40-foot containers of medical equipment to Tayu Hospital from Pennsylvania, including 50 hospital beds.

The Dutch Mennonite Mission started Tayu Hospital in the 1950s. It is owned by Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa and serves a rural, mostly Muslim community. MCC workers served there during the '50s, '60s and '70s.—*Tim Shenk for MCC*

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300 youth 'stand in the gap' for peace

Regional youth event draws three times the number of participants expected.

'Jesus was serious': Youth pray for peace at Military Park in Newton, Kan., during Stand in the Gap, a regional youth peace event.

Sharleen Francis

Referring to Christ's call for each of us to follow the path of peace and justice, Lynn Miller said, "Jesus was serious and he was talking to us." Three hundred Kansas and Nebraska youth, youth pastors and sponsors gathered at Newton (Kan.) High School April 2 to worship, listen to speakers and take part in public witness. The event was called "Stand in the Gap," referring to a peacemaker's role in standing between the oppressor and the oppressed.

Planners were surprised by how many attended. "We planned on maybe 100 registrants," said Lois Harder, co-pastor of Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church in Wichita, Kan., and chair of the planning committee.

"This goes to show how timely and how much need there is for an event like this," said Marty Troyer, also on the planning committee.

Miller's talk, including the message that Christ was willing to die but not kill, was well received by the 16 youth groups represented. "He really knew how to talk to youth," said Janessa Wedel of the Tabor-Goessel Youth Fellowship.

The event included worship music by a rock-country-bluegrass band, Miller's keynote address, lunch, nonviolence training by Jessica Phillips of Christian Peacemaker Teams and a public witness service with a silent prayer walk down Newton's Main Street.

Stand in the Gap was planned by the Western District Conference peace and social concerns committee, together with the WDC and South Central Conference youth ministry committee.
—Doug Krehbiel

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CALENDAR

Harmonies annual ***Ascension Sing*** and Benefit, May 14, 7:00 p.m. at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa. The singing will be informal in the acoustically live fellowship hall. The new *Sing the Journey* hymnal supplement will provide some of the songs. Singing will be led by Stanley Godshall, Patricia Martin, Glen Lehman and Nick Peterson. The entire offering will benefit the Old Order and Anabaptist Hymns Project, including the release in CD of several unique recordings of Old Order and early Anabaptist hymns. All are welcome.

Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society, Spring Meeting, April 29, 10 a.m, at the **Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center** on Route 116 between Metamora and Germantown Hills. Program features Robert Yoder of Eureka, whose topic is "An Anabaptist Heritage View from the Metamora Moraine." A light lunch will be offered after the program for the suggested donation of $4. For questions, please call 309-367-2551 or email info@imhgs.org or juliezoo@dtnspeed.net.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Advanced Consulting,"*** Sept. 11-14, Chicago area. For further information and registration brochures, contact Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd St., Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 630-627-0507; fax 630-627-0519; www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Healthy Congregations,"*** Sept. 22-23, Chicago area. For further information and registration brochures, contact Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd St., Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 630-627-0507; fax 630-627-0519; www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Healthy Congregations Facilitator Training,"*** Sept. 25-27, Schaumburg, Ill. For further information and registration brochures, contact Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd St., Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 630-627-0507; fax 630-627-0519; www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Leadership and Anxiety in the Church,"*** Oct. 4, Peoria, Ill. For further information and registration brochures, contact Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd St., Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 630-627-0507; fax 630-627-0519; www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Mediation Skills Training Institute,"*** Oct. 9-13, Pinole, Calif. For further information and registration brochures, contact Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd St., Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 630-627-0507; fax 630-627-0519; www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Facilitating Healthy Congregation Pastor-Congregation Relations,"*** Oct. 13-14, Pittsburgh, Pa. For further information and registration brochures, contact Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd St., Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 630-627-0507; fax 630-627-0519; www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation,"*** Oct. 17-19, Glendale, Ariz. For further information and registration brochures, contact Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd St., Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 630-627-0507; fax 630-627-0519; www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Facilitating Healthy Congregation Pastor-Congregation Relations,"*** Nov. 10-11, South Carolina. For further information and registration brochures, contact Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd St., Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 630-627-0507; fax 630-627-0519; www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Mediation Skills Training Institute,"*** Nov. 13-17, Tulsa, Okla. For further information and registration brochures, contact Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd St., Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 630-627-0507; fax 630-627-0519; www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

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BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Baird, Peyton Marshall, Jan. 9, to Marshall and Julie Mast Baird, Berlin, Ohio.

Blough, Elijah James, Feb. 27, to Timothy and Alycia Alwine Blough, Cayahoga, Ohio.

Claassen, Zachary Aaron, March 10, to Michael and Staci Goosen Claassen, Marlin, Wa.

Derstine, Jacob Isaiah, March 30, to Wendell and Jana Alderfer Derstine, Telford, Pa.

Eshleman, James Michael, March 23, to Daryl and Cheryl Eshleman, Lititz, Pa.

Fisher, Madeline Rose, March 13, to Steve and Holly Krystek Fisher, Wayland, Iowa.

Gardner, Rylan Lynn, Sept. 7, 2005, to Steve and Heidi Crabdree Gardner, Aurora, Colo.

Gilland, Mya Kayla, Jan. 23, to Scott and Linda Brubacher Gilland, Toronto, Ont.

Gingrich, Sophie Marie, March 21, to Ryan and Heather Gusler Gingrich, Royal Oak, Mich.

Glunt, Paige R., Feb. 14, to Thomas and Melissa Avery Glunt, Roaring Spring, Pa.

Hassinger, Levi Miller, Feb. 13, to Sean Hassinger and Karen Miller, Albuquerque, N.M.

Heinrichs, Wesley Alexander, Feb. 10, to Jeremy and April Pope Heinrichs, Denver, Colo.

Jones, Hagen Ray, Jan. 31, to Jason and Randi Huling Jones, Turpin, Okla.

Kindborn, Cole Thomas, Jan. 11, to Kyle and Jen Schade Kindborn, Wooster, Ohio.

King, Trevor Aaron, March 10, to Doug and Paula Evers King, Flanagan, Ill.

Lehman, Colten Allen, Feb. 9, to Jason and Jill Rizzo Lehman, Johnstown, Pa.

Litwiller, Chase Allan, March 22, to Ryan and Jaclyn Yasko Litwiller, Morris, Ill.

Martin, Jude Reedy, Feb. 12, to Andrew and Jill Reedy, Washington, D.C.

Molina, Daven Rafael, March 11, to David and Tessie Molina, Goshen, Ind.

Otto, Kimberly Jean, March 18, to Wilmer and Martha Yutzy Otto, Lovington, Ill.

Parker, Bryson Andrew, March 3, to Chad and Brandi Regier Parker, Turpin, Okla.

Prough, Kellen Macallister, March 28, to Roger and Jennifer Vardaman Prough, Elkhart, Ind.

Shaffer, Amelia Jean, March 15, to Kirby and Lydia Hunsberger Shaffer, Somerset, Pa.

Stempel, Maximillion, Feb. 2, to Michael and Sone Liambounheuang Stempel, Broadway, Va.

Stetler, August William, March 3, to Jason and Collette Sharp Stetler, Lancaster, Pa.

Wiebe, Grant Todd, Feb. 28, to Todd and Tara Kramer Wiebe, Denver, Colo.

Yoder, Robert Josiah, March 10, to Bob and Pamela Bressler Yoder, Goshen, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Chuchman/Hildebrandt: Andriana Chuchman and Adam Hildebrandt, March 4 at Vladimir and Olga Cathedral, Winnipeg, Man.

Doll/Nagel: Josiah Doll, Canton, Ohio, and Shannon Nagel, Lodi, Ohio, March 18 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Esau/Kaufman: Kateisha Esau, Hesston, Kan., and Jesse Kaufman, Hillsboro, Kan., March 25 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Hunsberger/Speigle: Reuben Hunsberger, Davidsville, Pa., and Jeri Speigle, Hollsopple, Pa., Feb. 17 at Kaufman Mennonite Church, Hollsopple.

Martin/Reinford: Terry Martin, Goshen, Ind., and Wanda Reinford, Goshen, March 25 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Nogueras/Swarzendruber: Nicolle Nogueras, Silver Spring, Md., and Tim Swartzendruber, Silver Spring, March 11 at Knowles Chapel of Rollins College, Winter Park, Fla.

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"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

DEATHS

Christophel, M. Lucille Troyer, 88, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 30. Spouse: Warren Christophel. Parents: M.L. and Elizabeth Good Troyer. Children: Janice Langstaff, Joseph; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 3 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Drudge, Walter J., 83, Goshen, Ind., died March 3. Spouse: Mildred Drudge (deceased). Parents: Menno and Emma Reesor Drudge. Children: Carolyn Strand, Myrna DeAgostino, Judy Engel. Funeral: March 7 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Gehman, Harley Allen, 47, Souderton, Pa., died March 26. Parents: Harley and Anna Derstine Gehman. Funeral: March 30 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Geiger, Robert, 64, Kidron, Ohio, died March 15 from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Parents: Adam and Tamar Geiger. Funeral: March 18 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Gerig, Virgil M., 88, Goshen, Ind., died March 13. Spouse: Mary Kay Remseyer Gerig (deceased). Parents: Melvin and Della Yoder Gerig. Children: Christine Thogersen, Elinor, Beth Bontrager, David A., Richard L.; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 19 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Goerzen, Sue Nikkel, 80, Harrow, Ont., died Jan. 14. Spouse: Gerhard Goerzen. Children: John, Mary Goerzen-Sheard; two grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 18 at Harrow Mennonite Church.

Graber, Marjorie Watts, 82, Wayland, Iowa, died March 11. Spouse: Willis Graber (deceased). Parents: Howard P. and Bessie Scarff Watts. Children: Larry, Wendell; foster-child: Vickie Paulsen; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 15 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Hartline, Frank, 93, Wooster, Ohio, died March 23. Spouse: Alice I. Bond Hartline (deceased). Parents: Edwin and Jennie Reese Hartline. Children: Marilyn, Myron. Funeral: March 4 at Wooster Mennonite Church.

Hoke, Jonathan H., 71, Goshen, Ind., died March 7. Spouse: Carol Wiebe Hoke. Parents: Clarence M. and Leona Rhinesmith Hoke. Children: Jon, Joann Cramer, Joni Bradberry, Jennifer Snyder; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: March 11 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Horst, Arlene Sauder, 64, Goshen, Ind., died March 6 of cancer. Spouse: Oren F. Horst. Parents: Roy and Selma Gautsche Sauder. Children: O. Douglas, Eric E.; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 11 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

King, Pauline Yoder, 85, Goshen, Ind., died March 10. Spouse: Paul L. King. Parents: Rueben and Mary Zook Yoder. Children: Titus, James, John, Daniel, David, Susanne Berlin; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 18 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Landis, Grace Denlinger, 87, Lancaster, Pa., died March 19. Spouse: Norman S. Landis (deceased). Parents: Martin H. and Alice Diffenbach Denlinger. Children: Merie L. Kreider, Elaine L. Hollinger, Clair D.; 18 grandchildren; 46 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 22 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Metzler, Ruth Chambers, 85, Nappanee, Ind., died March 28. Spouse: Raymond L. Metzler (deceased). Parents: Roy and Orpha Yoder Chambers. Children: Vera Leinbach, Marie, Barbara Ramer, Stanley, Michael, John, Donald, Robert, Allen; 21 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 3 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Mierau, LeVina Friesen, 83, Henderson, Neb., died March 27. Spouse: Arthur H. Mierau (deceased). Parents: George A. and Katie Friesen. Children: Randy, Milan, Judy Epp; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 30 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Miller, Adlai, 82, Nappanee, Ind., died March 14. Spouse: Clara Mullett Miller. Parents: Sam and Tillie Schrock Miller. Children: Joe, Ben, Lamar, Mattie Miller Dausman, Mary Miller Dorrier, Ann Miller Flora; 12 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; seven step-grandchildren; 10 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 18 at Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Adrian Reno, 93, La Junta, Colo., died March 21. Spouse: Myrtle Schweitzer Miller. Parents: Elias and Nettie Graber Miller. Funeral: March 25 at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, La Junta.

Miller, Nedra M., 92, Goshen, Ind., died March 3. Spouse: John W. Miller (deceased). Parents: Almond and Ida Troyer Hostetler. Children: Neva Beck, Margaret Ingold, Rebecca Schrock; 11 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 6 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Miller, Vernon U., 89, Goshen, Ind., died March 26. Spouse: Bertha Stauffer Miller. Parents: Uriah and Barbara Kaufman Miller. Children: Nancy Ketcham, Linda "Pert" Shetler, Melodie Davis, Terry; nine grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 30 at North Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Schroeder, John, 85, North Newton, Kan., died March 20. Spouse: Grace Abrahams Schroeder. Parents: P.M. and Agnes Schmidt Schroeder. Children: Jeffrey, Catherine Holdeman; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 23 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Oyer, Vilas J., 88, Gibson City, Ill., died March 17. Spouse: Viola Oyer Stauffer. Parents: Samuel and Elmira Naffziger Oyer. Children: Jerry, Ken, Anna Marie, Helen Mae Amberg; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 20 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Roth, David E., 70, Salem, Ore., died March 11 of cancer. Spouse: (1st) Sydney "Penny" Roth (deceased), (2nd) Beverly Bear. Children: Ellen Johnson, Aaron; three grandchildren. Funeral: March 26 in Salem.

Russell, Dale, 47, Salem, Ore., died March 9 of cancer. Spouse: Juel Yoder Russell. Parents: Walt and Doris Russell. Children: Dale, Carolyn, Betty, Molly; six grandchildren. Funeral: March 18 at Salem Mennonite Church.

Schwartz, Agnes M., 85, Elkhart, Ind., died March 16. Spouse: Victor L. Schwartz. Parents: Samuel and Bertha Eicher. Children: Rosa Dirmyer, Mary Anderson, Miriam Gustin; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 20 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Strite, Lewis E., 85, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 15. Spouse: Ethel Showalter Strite. Parents: Edgar and Mary Martin Strite. Children: L. Gerald, Elaine, Carmen Strite Miller; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 18 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Stuckey, Melvin C., 83, Fayette, Ohio, died March 24. Spouse: M. Joan Graber. Parents: Aaron and Lottie Klinger Stuckey. Children: Randy, Greg, Arnie, Deborah Taddeo; eight grandchildren. Memorial service: March 27 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Swan, Louise Epp, 93, Henderson, Neb., died March 28. Spouse: (1st) Albert A. Buller (deceased), (2nd) Arthur Swan (deceased). Parents: Jacob M. and Marie Peters Epp. Children: Don Buller, Dale Buller, Glen Buller, Donna Ratzlaff, Leroy Trautman, Albert Lee (deceased); 16 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 3 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Thiessen, John J., 94, Altona, Man., died Feb. 14. Spouse: Susanna Funk Thiessen (deceased). Parents: Frank and Helena Thiessen. Children: Edwin, Walter, Arthur, Sidney, Eldon; 13 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

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Cove Valley Christian Youth Camp, located in south central Pennsylvania is looking for a full-time ***food service director***. Benefits provided. For more information, contact Allen R. Eshleman, Executive Director at 877-268-3267 or email covevalleycamp@pa.net.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2006.

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Contact Mike Wenger at mwenger@westernmennoniteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

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Bethany Christian Schools (gr. 6-12; enrollment 300) invites applications for the following positions for 2006-07: ***English 11 and 12 teacher*** (60 percent assignment) and ***chemistry and physics teacher*** (full-time). For more details, see www.bethanycs.net or contact the principal. To apply, submit a resumé and letter of application to Allan Dueck, Principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-5499. Phone 574-534-2567; email akdueck@bethanycs.net.

Jubilee Ministries, prison ministry located in Lebanon, Pa., is seeking an ***assistant director*** to oversee various ministry areas, which could include prison chaplains, aftercare, counseling and Café Beracah. Qualified applicants will have minimum of three years management experience, strong administrative and verbal skills, a passion for Jesus Christ and lost souls. This position may be full-time or part-time as the gifts and interests of the qualified applicant are taken into consideration. Visit www.jub.org for details about Jubilee. Please submit your resumé to Jubilee Ministries, 235 S 12th St., Lebanon, PA 17042 or to ClairW@jub.org.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following positions for the 2006-07 school year: ***mathematics instructor, physical science/physics instructor, social studies instructor*** (full-time, second semester).

Send resumé to: Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

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Sponsored by Mennonite Association of Retired Persons, for further information about the Classic, please contact Helen Lapp at the MARP office (marp-soop@juno.com and 215-/866-721-7730) or Stuart Showalter, MARP board member (269-353-8515).

* Individuals who are 50 years of age or older by July 1, 2006, are eligible.

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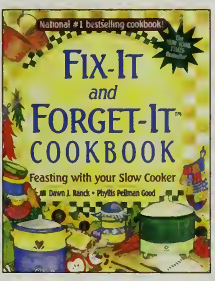
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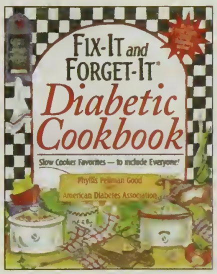
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The age of indifference

Gordon Houser

Is our indifference to a free press sowing the seeds of fascism? David Mindich thinks it may be.

Goshen (Ind.) College hosted a conference March 17 called "Tuned Out? Youth and the Future of News Media." Mindich, professor and chair of the journalism department at Saint Michael's College in Colchester, Vt., and author of the book *Tuned Out: Why Americans Under 40 Don't Follow the News* (Oxford University Press, 2005), gave the keynote address.

"We are the ultimate check on [government] power," he said, "citizens informed by a free press." When our being informed is hindered, so is democracy.

His studies have shown that most young people (under age 30) are more tuned out than most of us can imagine. Only 20 percent read newspapers every day, while only 33 percent of those in their 30s do. And the reading habits we develop in our 20s stay with us the rest of our lives. "We live in an age of indifference," he said.

Nevertheless, he does not blame young people, who are as thoughtful and idealistic as ever. And while the media are partly to blame, good journalism still happens.

One major culprit, he said, is entertainment. We no longer look to news people to speak for us. In 1968, Walter Cronkite spoke against U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and the U.S. government paid attention, because Cronkite represented the voice of the American people.

However, when Cronkite spoke against the Iraq War, almost no one paid attention. "It's difficult to have a national discussion today," Mindich said, when entertainment is ubiquitous. Eighty percent of sixth graders have a television in their room.

And news can't compete. When it tries to out-entertain entertainment, it loses every time.

What then can be done? Addressing media people as well as high school and college students interested in journalism, Mindich had several suggestions.

We can change journalism, he said. We should introduce more passion, offer more road maps. We should not talk down to readers or viewers.

Most changes, however, must happen outside the newsroom. We need to engage young people, teach civics in our schools.

"Journalism helps us not get [cheated]," he said. It helps prevent fascism. Trust in the military is greater than trust in media. Among nations, the United States is near the bottom of news consumption, while it's at the top of media consumption.

The conference also included various panels for discussion, representing broadcast media, print media, students, teachers, researchers and new media.

Marshall V. King, a reporter and columnist for *The Truth* newspaper in Elkhart, Ind., said that getting kids to read news is like a mother getting her kids to eat broccoli. Tim Harmon, managing editor for *The South Bend Tribune*, said the U.S. media cut 1,500 jobs last year and lost 1.5 million readers.

Zulma Prieto, editor of *El Puente*, the first Spanish-language newspaper in Indiana, has a growing readership. She said people feel powerless and left out. The mainstream media assume everything revolves around the United States. News tends to focus on leaders, not common people, and people are disillusioned. Mainstream news is canned, ignores context and offers no analysis.

Goshen student Megan Blank reported on a survey of Goshen College students about their news consumption and found that the Internet is their main source. TV's *The Daily Show* is often seen as news, she said, while Fox News and CNN are seen as entertainment. Over half could not name one Supreme Court justice.

While no one at the conference would admit to being indifferent to what goes on in our nation, all heard about the danger of not being informed and not communicating our concerns. Take a look at your own news consumption.

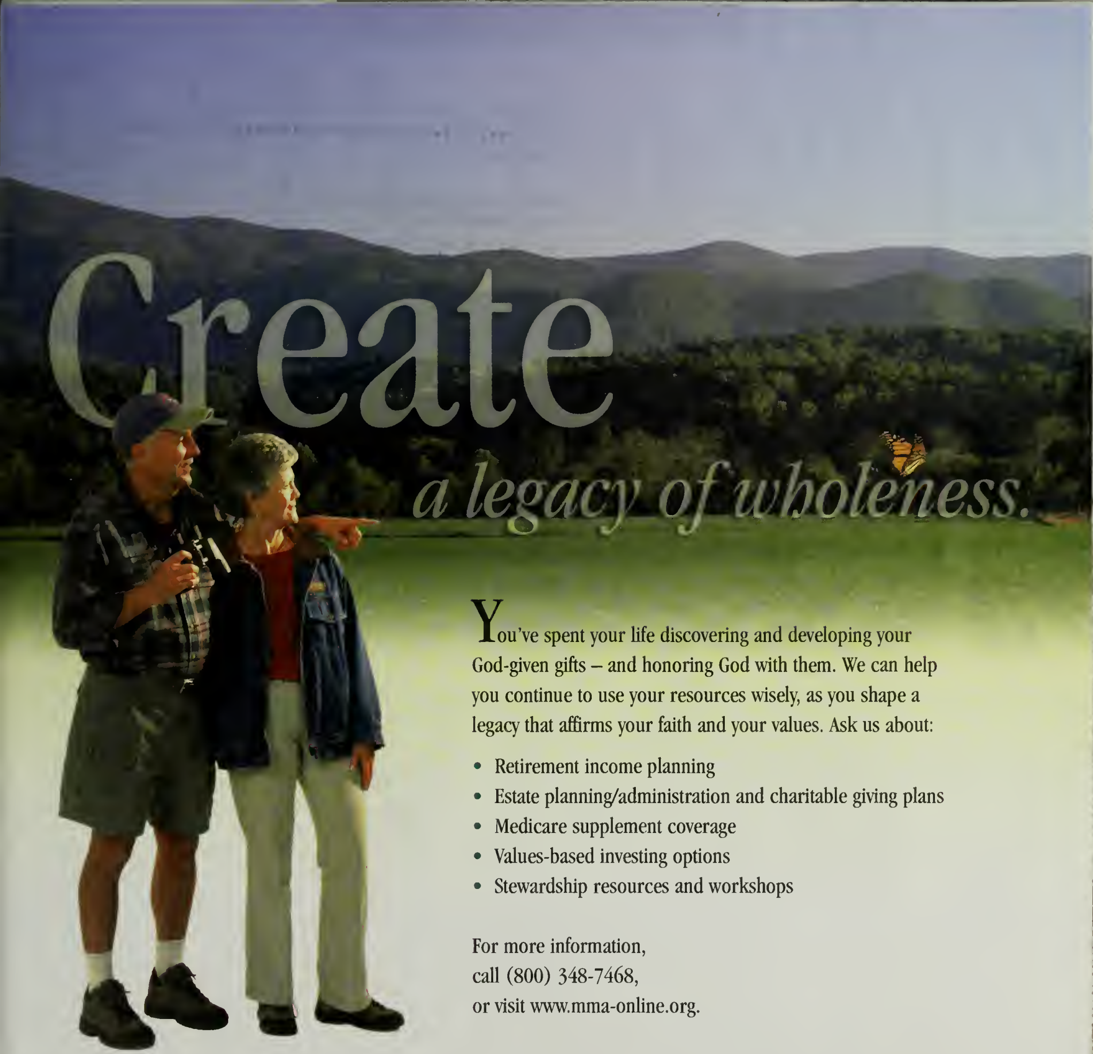
FILMS

Inside Man (R) is an intelligent thriller about a man who leads a group into a bank in New York's Wall Street district and takes everyone there hostage. Less interesting than the plot, which has numerous logical flaws, is director Spike Lee's glimpse into the racist actions of various characters, particularly the police. An excellent cast help carry it along.

Why We Fight (PG-13) is a reasoned, balanced documentary that looks at the military-industrial complex President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned against. Multinational corporations give greater allegiance to stockholder profits than to patriotic idealism. "There was a time right after 9/11 that the whole world was with us," says one observer. "Now we are more hated around the world than ever."

BOOKS

Christian pilgrimage is an ancient practice. Two books help us take part without leaving our chairs. **Pilgrims in the Kingdom: Travels in Christian Britain** by Deborah Douglas and David Douglas (Upper Room, 2004, $17) describes and reflects on 16 Christian sites in Great Britain and the Christ followers associated with each. Included are Iona and St. Columba, Oxford and C.S. Lewis, Norwich and Lady Julian, Pendle Hill and George Fox. Black-and-white photos by Joan Myers enhance the book. **Walk in a Relaxed Manner: Life Lessons from the Camino** by Joyce Rupp (Orbis Books, 2005, $15) offers lessons Rupp learned during her 37-day pilgrimage along the 500-mile Camino de Santiago in northern Spain. Her biggest lesson was "to slow down."



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Conflicted about peace

Everett J. Thomas

What does it mean for us Mennonites to be a peace church in a time of war? A confusing conflict persists in our fledgling denomination as members answer the question in at least three different ways:

1. A recent survey of Virginia Mennonite Conference members revealed that 40 percent supported the idea of the United States participating in war ("Survey: Weak Support for Peace Position," March 7).

There may be several ways to understand this finding, but I suspect it does not mean these Virginia Mennonites would personally go to war. Rather, it means that they believe God has given our government the responsibility to maintain order in any way necessary. Usually the first part of Romans 13 is cited as the basis for this conviction. One recent letter-writer explained this perspective and pleaded with us to publish his letter.

"Please consider sharing what I have written," said Steven J. Harnish in a note with his letter. "My views on war are widely held among the Mennonites I interact with, but I rarely see them expressed in your publication."

Harnish defended the U.S. invasion of Iraq by citing the horrific crimes committed by Saddam Hussein against his own people (Readers Say, April 4). In this view, the U.S. government became the "agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13:4).

Harnish is right; we seldom see this point of view expressed in letters to the editor or in the articles submitted to us for publication. But it is a widespread conviction, and it goes something like this: We Mennonites are a people of peace fortunate enough to live in a land that provides us with security and prosperity. Our duty, then, is to be grateful for our situation. Consequently, it is inappropriate to tell our government it is wrong when it exercises its God-given right (in the Virginia conference survey, 57 percent were not supportive of peace protests).

The response of many young Mennonite men during World War II epitomized this view: Although unwilling to personally fight in the most popular war of the century, they accepted alternative service assignments to help the country's infrastructure while so much of the work force was engaged in war.

2. Another view of the peace church's relationship to government emerged during the unpopular Vietnam War. By the early 1970s, Mennonites found themselves linked to a popular cause: getting our country out of Southeast Asia. Consequently, a new way of being pacifist emerged: refusing to participate in the military draft. Some young men went to Canada to avoid conscription while others burned their draft cards and dared the government to prosecute them.

There are at least two ways this orientation to government continues among Mennonites. The Campaign for a National Peace Tax Fund has some members refusing to pay their federal taxes so that their personal dollars cannot be drafted to fight wars. Another program: the Student Aid Fund for Nonregistrants replaces lost student aid for Mennonite college students who, for reasons of conscience, refuse registration with the U.S. Selective Service system.

3. But it is a third way of thinking about the peace church's relationship to government that is making the most news these days: actively resisting what the government is trying to do. We have seen the most dramatic form of this resistance from Christian Peacemaker Teams (see April 4, pages 22-23). Their goal is to "get in the way" of military action. But there are other ways to get in the way. Last year Mennonite Church USA members debated how actively to be involved in government. Many members believe Mennonites who are U.S. citizens should be directly involved in shaping government policy through votes, campaign contributions and, even, by getting elected.

Mennonite Church USA is a peace church, but we do not agree on what that means. That is all the more reason for us to debate—as peacefully as possible—how we should relate to our government in this time of war. Ask this question in your congregation and discover which of these three perspectives is most prevalent. Hopefully, talking carefully about what it means to be a peace church will not lead to more conflict.—*ejt*

Talking carefully about what it means to be a peace church will not lead to more conflict.

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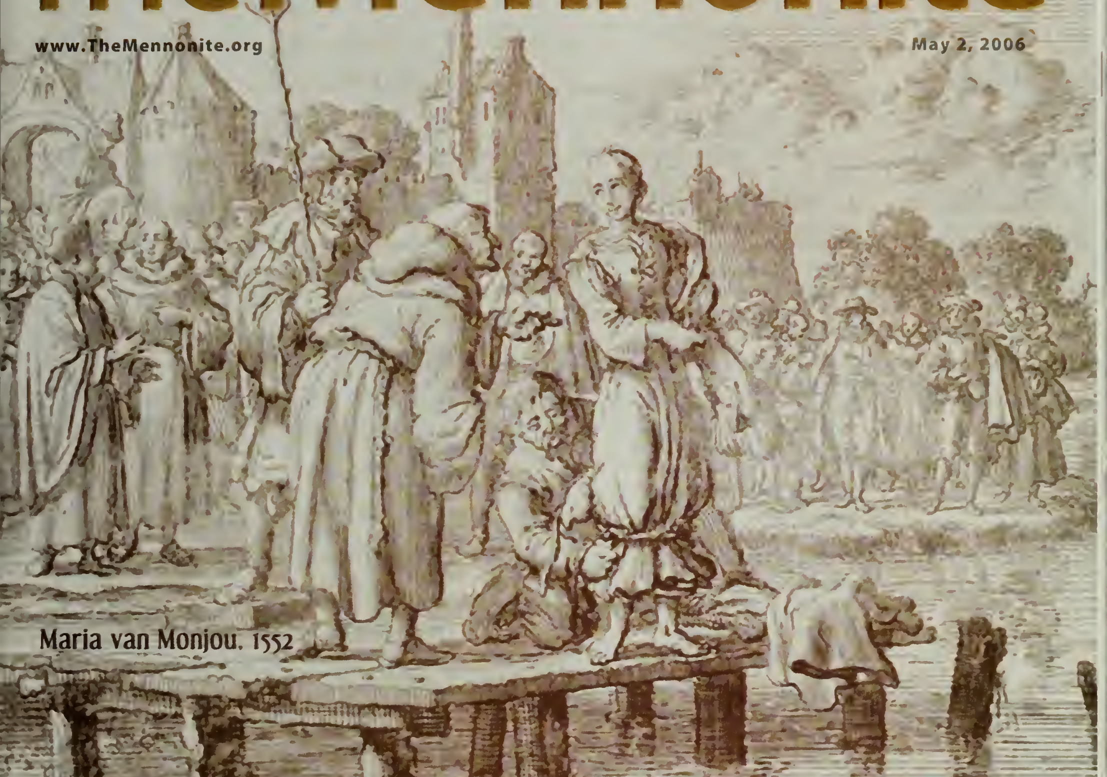

Maria van Monjou. 1552

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Envy: the black hole

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Are we willing to pursue a greater holiness before God? Then let's name and deal with envy, one of the seven deadly sins. Envy is wanting what others have. Envy is looking up the social ladder with a never-ending desire for more. I call envy the black hole. Since envy always desires what it doesn't have, it will never be satisfied. It always wants more, and what it gets disappears into the black hole of never-satisfied desire.

Envy has the power to generate all kinds of trouble and lead us into unthinkable sins. James 3:16 (NIV) says, "For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice." Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, then collaborated on an elaborate lie to cover it up (Genesis 37). This spirit of envy was rooted in the competition of the two mothers of these 12 brothers and fueled by the favoritism of their father, Jacob. If your family is obsessed with keeping things fair or equal or "looking as good as … ," you may want to step back and look at generational envy in the family tree.

Some other early warning symptoms of envy:

Comparisons. How often does meal time or family conversation run to making comparisons? We may compare the success of children, health, beauty, houses, cars, vacations, popularity, influence or power. We can always find people who have more of something.

Galatians 6:4-5 says, "Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life" (*The Message*).

Put downs. Bad news gossip about others is a symptom of envy. If you relish telling other people's problems, consider it envy.

Dejection or depression. A third symptom of envy is a lingering spirit of dejection or depression. Dejection is sorrow at someone else's success. We talk about people being green with envy. Green is good for the lawn or the garden but not people. Proverbs 14:30 (NIV) says, "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones."

As faithful Christians, we feel God should reward us with blessings, not troubles. It's depressing to live for God and then get hit with a bunch of trouble (Read Psalm 73).

Debt. A fourth symptom of envy is consumer or credit card debt. The average credit card debt per U.S. household topped $9,500 last year. Could credit card and consumer debt be something like a blood pressure check on envy?

How do we keep from sliding into this black hole of envy? Early intervention is good for beating pneumonia and for intercepting envy.

Claim your worthiness before God. Behind envy is a legitimate longing to be accepted, appreciated and valued. For a variety of reasons, we don't all get that as children or teenagers or adults. Instead we live with a deep-seated sense of inadequacy and inferiority that makes us vulnerable to envy. We need to claim our worthiness before God, one not dependent on our abilities or achievements but on being created in the image of God. "I am a unique, unrepeatable miracle of God."

Accept God's mysterious generosity. This step is particularly for committed Christians. Jesus told the story of harvest help being hired throughout the day (Matthew 20:1-16). At the end of the day, the owner paid the workers. To the surprise of everybody, those who worked only an hour got a full day's pay. Those who started at the beginning of the day expected a bonus. Instead they got just what they had been promised—a full day's wage.

I don't know why God gives some people more brains, good looks or opportunities, better parents, children, homes or incomes. God has a right to do what God chooses to do. The only way I can come to terms with envy is to accept God's mysterious and unexplainable generosity.

The Mennonite

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**
Cover: Jan Luycken etching, *Martyrs Mirror Book II*. Courtesy Mennonite Church USA Archives—North Newton

Vol. 9, No. 9, May 2, 2006

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 40033185, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $41.9S (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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Identity crisis—*Everett J. Thomas*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Love not nails

Bert Newton's fine article on the Transfiguration does not address the question of why it was necessary ("The Transfiguration: An Apocalypse of the Cross," April 4). The ancient church explains the reason for the Transfiguration in this powerful and compelling sentence from the Byzantine liturgy for the Feast of the Transfiguration: "You were transfigured on the mountain, and your disciples, as much as they were capable of it, beheld your glory, O Christ our God, so that when they should see you crucified they would understand that your Passion was voluntary, and proclaim to the world that you truly are the splendor of the Father."

This insight helps us understand Jesus' words in Mark 9:9 about not telling anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. It was love, not the nails, that held Jesus to the cross.—*Karl E. Steffy, Manheim, Pa.*

Global warming?

I am disappointed that Goshen (Ind.) College interim president John Yordy signed "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action" (News Digest, March 7). A quick search on the Internet revealed dozens of articles that question the validity of the Call's four points. There is question among scientists that global warming is caused by human activity. There is almost consensus among scientists that global warming may not be harmful.

Though many scientists are not greatly alarmed by global warming, three groups appear to be overwhelmingly alarmed that global warming is a great threat: politicians, journalists and academics. Global warming increases politicians' power and their ability to raise taxes, sells articles for journalists and gains government grants for academics. I prefer to listen to the scientists.—*Jon Kauffman, Fargo, N.D.*

Pro-life means antiwar

I agree with Timothy Allen that to have a consistent theology of life we must oppose all killing ("Pro-Life Means Antiwar," March 7). Therefore, if we say that absolutely all wars and executions are wrong, we cannot then turn around and say abortion is usually wrong but it is OK to kill an unborn baby if doing so saves the life of the baby's mother, or in cases of rape and incest.

If war and the death penalty are always wrong, it is always wrong to kill the unborn. We should insist that everybody in the peace movement must oppose all abortions or else deny them the right to call themselves peaceful. We should also insist that no one in the peace movement can consistently be in favor of killing people like Terri Schiavo by depriving them of food and water. The peace movement and the pro-life movement can point out each other's inconsistencies, but both movements must firmly oppose all forms of homicide, otherwise it looks likes each movement is saying to the other, "My selective respect for the sanctity of human life is better than yours."—*Jerry C. Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

To compare the casualties of war with the destruction of human life in the womb by way of abortion as Timothy P. Allen does in "Pro-Life Means Antiwar" is shortsighted and inconsistent.

It would probably be safe to say that Christians hold all life—particularly human life created in the image of God—in high regard. Very few Christians prefer war to peace. War, at least in the historical context of the United States, is brought about to combat the destructive forces of an aggressor. Where is the aggressive behavior resulting in the destruction of innocent life through abortion?

The turning points in history often go unnoticed at the time. The jihads or militant Muslims believe that Wahhabi Islam should own and control the Middle East, thus completing the Nazi holocaust of all Jews, and eventually subjugate the entire world.

More moderate believers within Reformed Islam believe they can live in peace with the rest of the world and move into the 21st century. The thought of George W. Bush and our military is that we must help the Reformed movement meet its goal and provide a "safe harbor" for democracy in addition to Israel within the Middle East. How can this goal for eventual peace and understanding by the destruction of the Jihad in their own backyard be compared with abortion? The one is the elimination of an evil force, while the other is the elimination of an unlived, innocent, human life. —*John G. Leunk, Wooster, Ohio*

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue's focus on Anabaptism emerged as do so many in our work: Several writers submitted manuscripts for publication without knowing about the articles others submitted. They melded nicely into a one-issue focus on Anabaptism and Mennonitism. Walter Klaassen offers a provocative essay suggesting that those of us in North America—and especially in the United States—should not call ourselves Anabaptist (page 8). Ted Grimsrud explains why the wounds from 16th-century European history live on among those of us who trace our spiritual lineage to those difficult days (page 10). Heather Ann Ackley looks at leadership style for Mennonite ministers today and describes why our polity stands in solidarity with the values of the first Anabaptists (page 13).—*Editor*

Bad theology begets bad foreign policy

In a Readers Say letter, Steven Harnish says, "but making war is a God-given prerogative of earthly authorities" (April 4). If that is true—and I don't believe it is—on what basis does Harnish judge Saddam Hussein for making war against the Kurds, Kuwait or Saudi Arabia? Wasn't Hussein just exercising his "God-given prerogative" as leader of the government of Iraq?

Harnish's sweeping generalization based on Romans 13:4 is off the mark. In Romans 13, Paul does grant that the governing authorities have the right to punish those who do wrong. But this right is not given in the context of waging war against other nations. At the same time, Paul does not say that earthly authorities have the right to define right and wrong, which is still God's prerogative. So, there are boundaries drawn around what governing authorities can and cannot do. The entire context of Romans 12 and 13 makes that clear.

If you take into account the whole counsel of God's Word, you also see that governing authorities sometimes step outside of God's boundaries. Governments sometimes do evil. In those cases, not only are we not to follow, we are to stand against what those governments do. Nowhere in Scripture does God give governing authorities the right to wage war when, where, why and how they want to, especially not in Romans 13:4.

The subtext of Harnish's conclusion is the common view that America is God's country, and we have the right to judge others using our God-given prerogative to wage war. That is bad theology begetting bad foreign policy.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

Community is messy business

As a pastor, I have witnessed and cringed at many of the excesses in congregational sharing times that Arthur Paul Boers notes in his article ("Thank You for Zebra Mussels, Asian Ladybugs and Sharing?" Feb. 21). Indeed, his article prompted significant and important discussion in our congregation. However, we should learn to respond to excess by addressing one another directly rather than eliminating the practice of sharing during worship. To eliminate sharing is to move toward a worship that is more managed but less the arena in which God may address our lives. This is a movement the church has made in centuries past with fateful, unintended consequences. Sharing times teach us to open our lives to one another and our children not to dichotomize their lives between "daily living" and going to church.

Community is messy business; we should neither expect otherwise nor seek to manage the messiness out of our experience. Rather, let us invite the Spirit of God into that mess.—*David B. Miller, State College, Pa.*

Title is racist

The article "Katrina and Faith in Action" (April 8) grabbed my attention. It certainly shows what good Christians can do when they pull together. However, I was taken aback to see the title "Miz" used repeatedly. This is a form of unintentional racism. Certainly if the story focused on a Caucasian, Asian or Latino group of people, that title would not have been used. It is a hand-me-down from the slave years.

The Mennonite has addressed the issue of racism numerous times: its roots, the effects of it, borders and lines drawn between people and cultures because of it, and the hurt it causes. *The Mennonite* has also addressed different ways to decrease racism, eliminate it and how it is or is not a problem within the church. It surprises me, then, that the editors did not handle this with the same caring sensitivity we have been instructed to use.—*Catherine Krueger, Clintonville, Wis.*

Editor's note: The authors understand the use of this term in that cultural context as a title of respect toward an older person.

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I prefer to call myself (102 votes):

○ a Mennonite (38%)

○ an Anabaptist (12%)

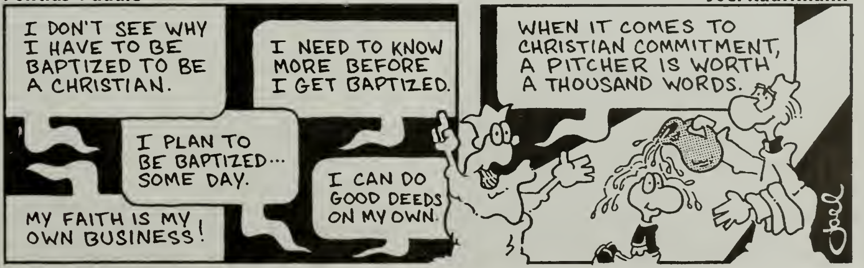
○ a Christian (39%)

○ it doesn't matter (11%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


I DON'T SEE WHY I HAVE TO BE BAPTIZED TO BE A CHRISTIAN.
I NEED TO KNOW MORE BEFORE I GET BAPTIZED.
I PLAN TO BE BAPTIZED... SOME DAY.
I CAN DO GOOD DEEDS ON MY OWN.
MY FAITH IS MY OWN BUSINESS!
WHEN IT COMES TO CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT, A PITCHER IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS.
Joel

IN BRIEF

Swartzendruber named director of peace center

The Anabaptist Peace Center—Washington, D.C., has named Keith Swartzendruber its first director. He has worked with the peace center since its inception in June 2004. A graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, he served one year at the Mennonite Central Committee United Nations Liaison Office. In 2003, he received a master's degree from the School of International Service at American University in International Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Lobby day for COs

On May 16, the National Campaign for Peace Tax Fund and the Center on Conscience and War are holding a national lobby day to protect the rights of conscientious objectors to war. Many participants will meet in Washington, and others will lobby locally at their Congress members' district offices. Many conscientious objectors see no difference between fighting in war or paying for someone else to fight. The Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill (H.R. 2631) would allow sincere COs to pay their federal income, gift and estate taxes into a fund earmarked for nonmilitary purposes only. For more information, call 888-732-2382.

MCC assists displaced people in Nigeria

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) helped to provide food and other aid to about 4,000 people who were recently displaced by a conflict in central Nigeria's Plateau State.

Violence broke out April 11 in the farming town of Namu because of a land rights dispute between two ethnic groups, according to news reports. Several days of fighting caused an estimated 200 deaths and displaced several thousand people.

About 4,000 people took shelter at a military barracks in the city of Shendam, where MCC workers discovered that they had no food several days later. MCC provided $11,900 to purchase food for one week, as well as eating utensils, sleeping mats, cooking pots and painkillers.

The distribution was carried out by the Nigerian Red Cross Society and the Emergency Preparedness Response Team, a network of Nigerian organizations that MCC helped form in 2005 to mediate conflicts in Plateau State.

"We are hoping that the crisis will settle within the week and people will begin moving back to their homes or what is left of them," reported Joanna Bergen, an MCC country representative in Nigeria.—*MCC*

Japanese Mennonite pastor, translator dies

OBIHIRO, Japan—Takio Tanase, 77, one of Japan's earliest Mennonites and an influential leader in the Mennonite conference of Hokkaido and the Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches, died April 6 in Tokyo.

In late 1951, Tanase moved to Kushiro to follow a friend, who served as an interpreter for Ralph and Genevieve Buckwalter, two of the first Mennonite mission workers in Japan through Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network. Young Tanase roomed with the American couple, and when his friend departed, he stepped in as interpreter for the mission workers despite having no use for the Christian faith.

Dale D. Gehman

Bible quizzers face off in Ohio tournament

From left, Dennis Stauffer coaches Elizabeth Mullet, Sheri Stauffer, Denise Stauffer and David Stauffer for Hope Community in Wayne County, Ohio, which won second place at the Kidron, Ohio, tournament on March 26. The Sand Ridge Bible quiz team from Northwest Ohio won first place at the 2006 Invitational Bible Quiz Tournament.—*Dale D. Gehman*

As Tanase translated and tutored Ralph Buckwalter in Japanese, Buckwalter mentored him in Bible study. Through this exchange Tanase became a believer. He was part of the first group baptized at the Kushiro congregation, one of the first two Mennonite churches in Hokkaido, in May 1952. He would go on to lead three Mennonite congregations in Japan's Hokkaido region and later the Honancho congregation in Tokyo and translate many key Mennonite texts into Japanese.

Tanase was born March 14, 1929, in Tokyo. His wife, Aiko Tanase, survives in Tokyo. Funeral services were held April 7-8.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Pasadena Church marches on Palm Sunday

PASADENA, Calif.—On Palm Sunday, 80 Christians marched through Pasadena to witness for God's reign of peace and justice. Sponsored and organized by the Peace Center at the Center for Anabaptist Leadership (a part of Shalom Ministries), Pasadena Mennonite Church and the Urban Village (an intentional Anabaptist community), the parade marked its fourth anniversary this year. Participants waived palm branches, banged drums and carried signs calling for an end to war. They stopped in front of a busy outdoor mall and worshiped and witnessed through songs and prayers.

The parade began at a church in northwest Pasadena, the economically marginalized part of the city, and wound its way to an upscale mall in the center of the business district. The symbolism of walking from margins to center was intentional: Jesus and his disciples culminated a journey from the margins of their society to the center on the first Palm Sunday.

This year the parade was dedicated to Tom Fox of Christian Peacemaker Teams, who was executed a month earlier while witnessing for peace in Iraq. —*Bluffton University*

MPN launches new resources, ends old ones

WATERLOO, Ont./SCOTTDALE, Pa.—This summer Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) will launch some new resources that will incorporate features of two longstanding children's Sunday school publications, *Story Friends* and *On the Line*,

Dustin Combs

hool prayer alive at Goshen
rents of Goshen (Ind.) College students gathered in front of
e Administration Building during the college's first Parents'
ay of Prayer March 18. The day gave parents of current stu-
nts the opportunity to walk around the campus while pray-
g for the faculty, students and administration that dwell,
rk and study in the buildings.—*Goshen College*

which will be discontinued after experiencing declining subscriptions for several years.

Gather 'Round, a Sunday school curriculum beginning this fall, has incorporated some features from *On the Line* into *Grow*, the student book for middler children. *God With Us Today* offers 100 short devotions for families with children ages 4 through 12. Three age-appropriate Bible reading record booklets, scheduled for publication in 2006, will encourage children to read their Bibles at home. In 2007, MPN will publish two books for primary and middler children that celebrate Anabaptist faith heroes.

Other periodicals published by Mennonite Publishing Network—*Rejoice*, *Purpose* and *Leader*—will continue in their current forms. Beginning this September, *With*—a magazine for high school youth—will shift from bimonthly to quarterly publication. For more information, call 800-245-7894.—*Mennonite Church USA*

CPT workers help rescue a migrant

TUCSON, Ariz.—Javier (not his real name) was three months old the first time he entered the United States without documents about 27 years ago. Never looking back, his family settled in Chicago's west side, where he graduated from high school. Fluent in English with a thick Chicago accent, Javier did not know Mexico before he was deported to Guerrero, where he has aunts and uncles.

Christian Peacemaker Teams workers found Javier hobbling around the desert, carrying a jug of his own urine, from which he had been drinking for the day. Only raw skin remained on his blistered feet. He was wandering about 100 yards from an encampment of Minutemen—an armed vigilante group on the lookout for migrants. They helped Javier into a car and took him to a nearby migrant shelter for treatment.

Southern Arizona has a long history of vigilante violence against migrants. In the 1970s the Hannigan brothers tortured migrants with cattle irons in Cochise County. Last summer, a lone vigilante held seven migrants at gunpoint. Despite this unlawful detention, the vigilante was not arrested. This winter, the Minuteman reported that they detained migrants while waiting for the U.S. Border Patrol. The stories of the "caza migrantes"—migrant hunters, as they are known in Mexico—strike fear into documented and undocumented Mexican-Americans along the border.—*CPT*

Goodville Mutual contributes to ministries

NEW HOLLAND, Pa.—Property and casualty insurers had a profitable year in 2005 despite record losses from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It was a very good year for Goodville Mutual Casualty Company.

Goodville Mutual contributed $24,000 from its earnings to seven colleges and seminaries in the states where it operates. It also gave $50,000 to 10 elementary and secondary schools in its home office area in Pennsylvania for scholarships.

Mennonite Central Committee received $15,000 for its international micro-enterprise development programs and for disaster response in the Caribbean and the Gulf Coast. Goodville also contributed $5,000 to Mennonite World Conference for the Global Mennonite History project.

Started by Mennonites in 1926, Goodville serves Mennonite, Brethren and other people with similar values in nine states: Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia.—*Goodville Mutual*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

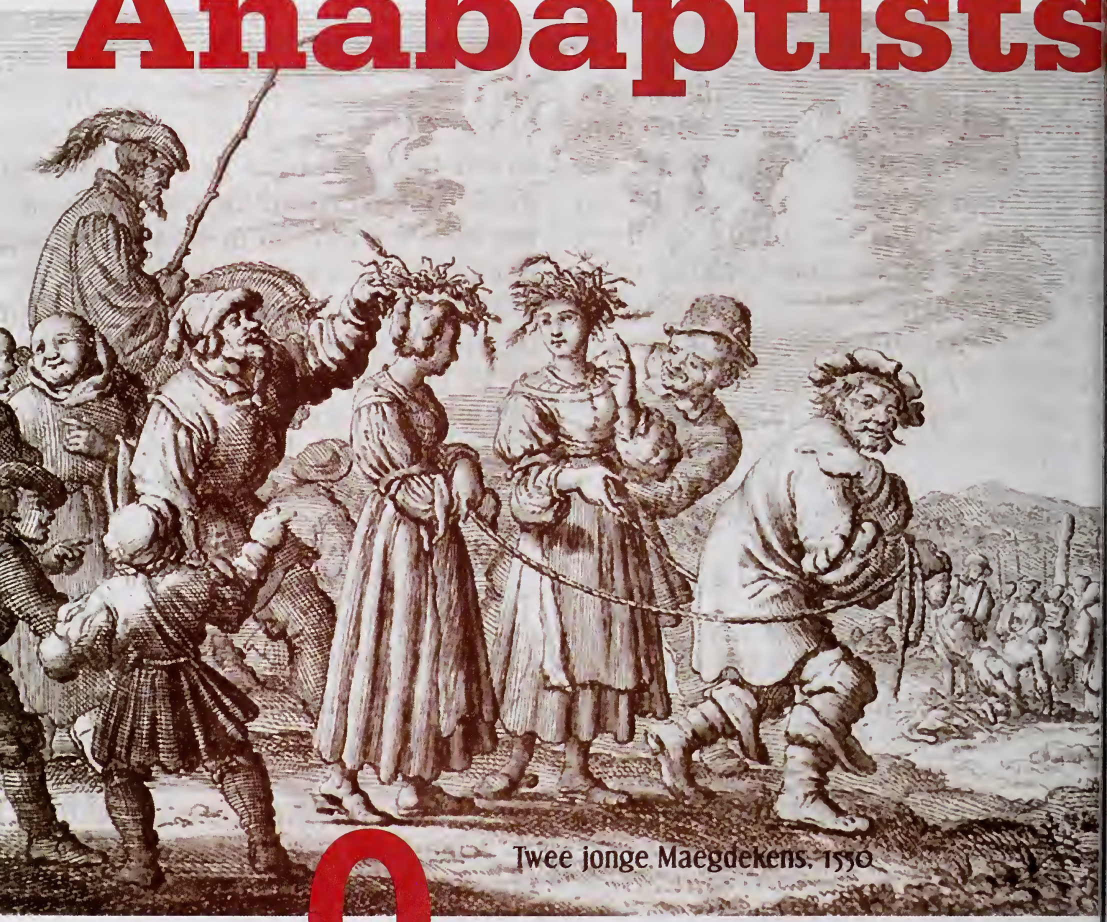
Archbishop warns Bush about his climate stance

Singling out President Bush, the archbishop of Cantebury warned March 28 that politicians who fail to prevent global warming face "a very heavy responsibility before God." Rowan Williams, the spiritual leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion, said Bush's refusal to cut greenhouse gas emissions—because it might compromise American jobs—is not compatible with a Christian point of view. "Nobody … likes talking about enforceable international protocols," Williams said. "We have to contemplate these very unwelcome possibilities if we want the global economy not to collapse and millions, billions, of people not to die."—*RNS*

Tanzanian Mennos respond to drought

Iringa Road Church, a Mennonite congregation in Dodoma, Tanzania's capital, is distributing 24 tons of corn and six tons of beans to about 2,000 people in drought-stricken central Tanzania with support from Mennonite Central Committee. Lack of rain has caused food shortages in central Tanzania and other parts of East Africa. MCC is providing $11,500 to purchase food in Dodoma and pay for transportation. Iringa Road Church is covering other expenses, such as feeding volunteers. —*MCC*

Anabaptists



Twee jonge Maegdekens, 1550

by Walter Klaassen

Our 16th-century forebears were not out to separate from the Catholic church of their day but to reform it.

Over the course of my life I have done my bit in lectures and books to make 16th-century Anabaptism visible. I remain an advocate for the Anabaptist form of Christian faith as put forward by, for example, Pilgram Marpeck. The fact that I and Ruth, my wife, now worship and work in the Anglican church has done nothing to change that.

But I have grown increasingly uneasy, even disturbed, by the now common designation of Mennonites as Anabaptists. We seem to think that in spite of our often uncritical cultural accommodation we can somehow preen ourselves with the bright feathers of a heroic tradition. Then we go on to imagine that we can be like those who were part of that tradition those centuries ago by adopting the nickname their enemies gave them.

I suspect all this is part of what we call multiculturalism. We celebrate our distinctiveness from others in church and world. It looks suspiciously like another brand of sectarianism.

Those of us who have studied and written about 16th-century Anabaptism have not emphasized sufficiently that our 16th-century forebears were not out to separate from the Catholic church of their day. Like the reformers Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli

& Mennonites

If we in North America are going to call ourselves Anabaptists, there ought to be some resemblance between us and them.

and Thomas Cranmer, they were out to reform the *one* church, not to create another. It was the lamentable consequence of an intolerant century that their efforts were rejected and came to nothing because Anabaptists refused to embrace the coercive methods of the other reformers. Their vision to contribute to the reform of the one church failed, as did that of the other reformers. Perhaps we can identify the Mennonite tradition as a long-term holding action in order that the original vision not be lost.

What especially characterized 16th-century Anabaptists was that they stood consciously against and challenged virtually everything their Christian culture took for granted. They rejected all religious coercion and insisted that governments had no role in the internal life of the church. They rejected the emerging capitalist economic system of the time primarily because it discriminated against the poor and defenseless. They refused to accept any justification for the use of force and killing in the defense of the gospel. They paid an extremely high price for accepting the baptism of believing adults as a sign of commitment to follow Christ because it was against the law and often carried the death penalty. If we in North America are going to call ourselves Anabaptists, there ought to be some resemblance between us and them.

The Anabaptists of the 16th century are our spiritual ancestors, and we rightly celebrate their life, witness and martyrdom by rehearsing their story. But that does not make us Anabaptists. First, with few exceptions, we are not rebaptized, for that is what the name means. We are not persecuted and hounded into prison and death for our faith. We are affluent and conformed to this world in our enthusiastic embrace of consumerism and therefore don't have the singleness of heart that was required of them for living faithfully in the face of imprisonment, torture, exile and death.

Without doubt, we are trying to live faithfully in our time and place, but it's hard because it costs us virtually nothing to be baptized; baptism has no life and death outcome for us. It is confusing because we are no longer sure about our faith; its basis keeps shifting uncertainly for us as for other Christians. Anabaptists were human and did not always get things right, but without exception they knew the basis of their faith was that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had come into the world to save sinners, that in his death they had forgiveness of sins and that in his resurrection they had the light and power to live the Christian life. They had confidence and trust in God's love and judgment that would see them through the darkness of their time to the light of his eternal kingdom.

It is a betrayal of Anabaptism to reduce Christian faith to social activism as we are inclined to do. We are not called to change the world by our own efforts. We do not build God's kingdom; it is a gift God gives us when we have faith in Christ and which we may by God's grace receive.

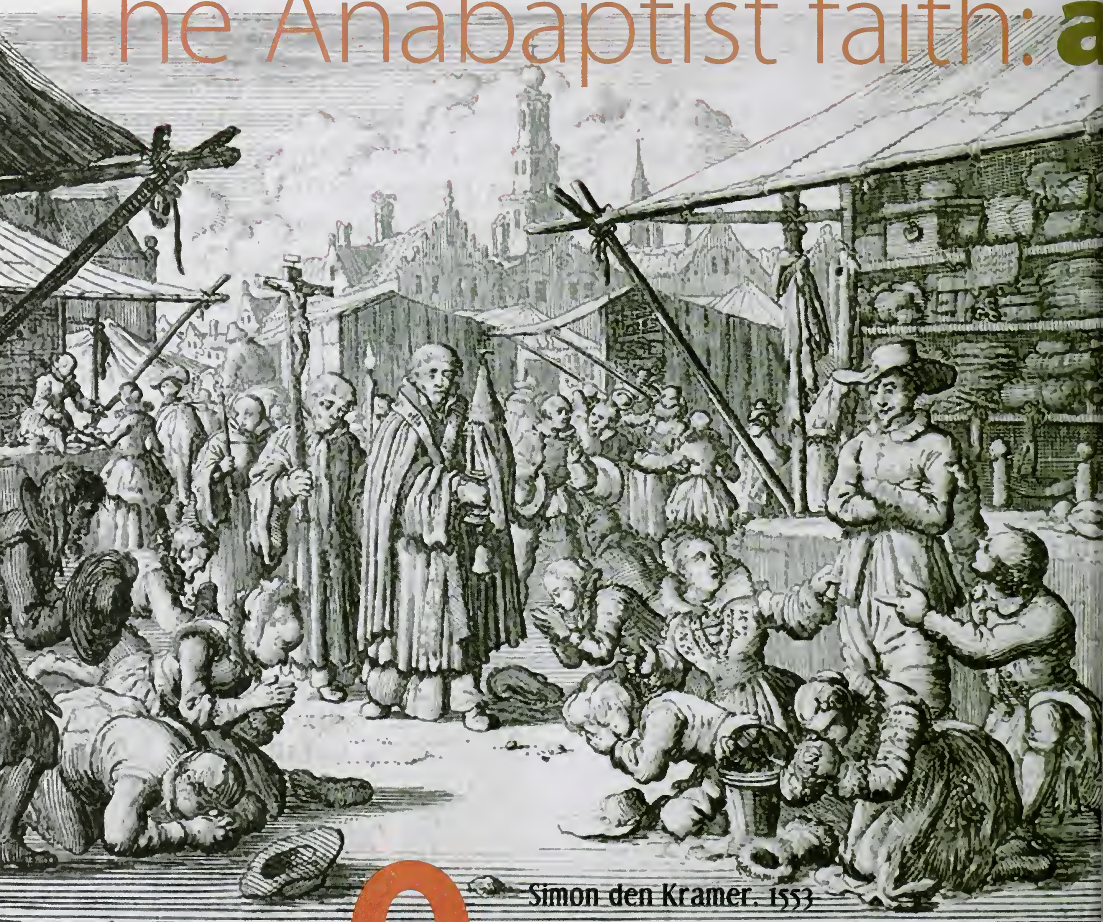
There are, however, some Mennonites who may justifiably use the name Anabaptist. They live in Vietnam, Colombia, Ethiopia and in other places in the world where they were and are being persecuted for their faith by repressive governments and therefore know what it was like to be Anabaptists back then. And then there are also those who have come into the Mennonite churches from churches that still baptize infants and who have been rebaptized. These also have a right to be called Anabaptists. Perhaps we could dignify all these as modern Anabaptists and the rest of us be content with being called Mennonites, our old nickname.

If we are going to be faithful to the Anabaptist vision, then we will renounce all separatism and ethnic pride and participate in the incomplete, ongoing reform of the whole church.

If we are going to be faithful to the Anabaptist vision, then we will renounce all separatism and ethnic pride and participate in the incomplete, ongoing reform of the whole church to the glory of God and his Son Jesus, who prayed that we all be one.

Walter Klaassen is author of Anabaptist: Neither Catholic Nor Protestant *(Pandora Press, 2001)*

The Anabaptist faith: a



by Ted Grimsrud

The past is never dead. It's not even past.—William Faulkner, "Requiem for a Nun"

Our Anabaptist tradition lives on with us. We do not create our rituals and beliefs out of nothing. We inherit them, even as they continue to evolve. We sing because those who came before us sang. We praise God, question God and pray in ways shaped by those who precede us.

At the same time, we carry wounds and scars from the past. The therapist Alice Miller has written that much of emotional pain, violence-dealing and general distress in our world dates to the pain young children experience. She believes it is a tragic and destructive myth that it's OK to hurt young children in order to "whip them into shape" with the rationale that "they won't remember it anyway." She believes our bodies store up the pain, and it festers in our hearts with a great likelihood of wreaking havoc later on.

The impact of wounds from the past ripples through the generations. In the 16th century, a group of highly idealistic people in Europe known as Anabaptists discovered something precious and exciting when they began to live a radically Jesus-oriented

The impact of wounds from the past ripples through the generations.

living tradition

4 things that got the Anabaptists in trouble

gospel. They were big on loving each other and even their enemies, on sharing possessions with those in need, on experiencing the Holy Spirit as a direct presence in their lives. And they wanted to tell others about this. So they did—for awhile. But then they were almost overwhelmed by a tidal wave of the most violent opposition imaginable.

The people in power in Europe simply could not abide with the spirituality of the Anabaptists, calling them "enthusiasts," as if that were a cussword. This hostility boggles the mind. Imagine Christians burning, hanging and drowning thousands of other Christians.

Somehow the Anabaptist movement survived. But survival came at a cost. Let's consider the impact of those deep-seated wounds on our tradition.

Mennonite farm in Tiege, Molochna, Russia, circa 1880-1890
Mennonite Church USA Archives—North Newton

To survive, the Anabaptists transformed themselves from "enthusiasts," eager to spread their message, to "the quiet in the land." Down to the present, many peace-loving Mennonites have avoided taking chances in making their peace convictions known, fearing criticism or stronger from the powers that be.

As often happens in cases of abuse, an ironic fruit of the old wounds seems to be a tendency to identify with and meekly defer to the abusers, to people in authority. Rather than eliciting a strong suspicion of the authorities, the opposite often happens. We uncritically defer to authority—from outside and within our communities.

Another consequence of the wounds also may be the desire to avoid conflict in general. Some new Mennonites are attracted by the inspirational stories of the 16th-century Anabaptist radicals and martyrs who followed Jesus into profound conflicts with the forces of violence and oppression. Yet today we find within many Mennonite communities a serious avoidance of conflict.

Likewise, some accept the personal message of Jesus to "take up your cross and follow me," step out from the crowd and seek the truth. Then we discover these amazing Anabaptists, who made such personal commitments at great cost. Yet in their descendants we often see a powerful sense of conformity, a disrespect for personal expressions of faith that challenge the majority, a tendency to stifle dissent and creative thinking.

All these characteristics—a reluctance to engage the wider society with our peace message, a tendency to defer to authority, a desire to avoid conflict, a push toward conformity within our communities—may well come from the wounds the early Anabaptists suffered. They were survival techniques but with a significant cost. The past is not even past. It shapes our current practices, our current language. It still shapes us through the wounds visited on our forebears.

Another sense in which the past is not past is with our ideals. We learn the most from Anabaptist ideals when we are self-conscious about the questions and issues that matter to us today and link us back to them. The Anabaptists asked how their lives took part in the story Jesus lived in. Today we ask, How do we learn from being part of this same, continuing story?

Our best entry into the 16th-century Anabaptist part of our story (as well as into the Jesus part of our story) is to ask, What got them in trouble?

Our best entry into the 16th-century Anabaptist part of our story (as well as into the Jesus part of our story) is to ask, What got them in trouble? Why were they persecuted and even killed (as were Jesus and the early Christians)? Asking such questions means facing our wounds, mentioned earlier, and going back into the issues that caused those wounds.

Here are four embodied ideals that got Anabaptist communities into trouble:

1. Their break from the state-church system. Their practice of believer's baptism shattered the iron-clad linking of church membership and citizen-

Continued on page 12

Outspoken witness to a faith that rejects warfare may well seem just as seditious today as it did in the 16th century.

Continued from page 11

World War I conscientious objectors wait their turn for a hearing before the Board of Inquiry, Fort Riley, Kan., 1918.
Mennonite Church USA Archives—North Newton

ship in the state and the state's dominance of the church. A church free from state control undermined social unity. Thus believer's baptism (and the refusal to baptize infants) was a crime punishable by death. It was so not mainly because it was heresy but because it was sedition; a crime not so much against correct doctrine as a crime against the state.

2. Their refusal to participate in or support wars. The problem with Anabaptist pacifism was not so much that it deprived the state of soldiers but that by publicly insisting that war was unchristian, Anabaptists again threatened the social order.

3. Their rejection of hierarchies. They believed in upside-down power. They believed Jesus' statement that the rulers of the nations lord it over people and that his followers are not to imitate that pattern. Anabaptists got into trouble for their disrespect for the leadership structures of the established church and for their refusal to submit to government hierarchies.

4. Their belief in an alternative economics, based on sharing and simplicity. This stood out as countercultural in the context of the beginnings of western capitalism and colonialism in Europe. Europe's insatiable quest for gold and other riches led to the destruction of countless lives and cultures throughout the world.

These four core ideals, perhaps the main factors that got Anabaptists into so much trouble, remain alive today.

For example, we live in a time of trumpet-blowing nationalism that underwrites world domination as a "Christian" duty. For Anabaptists to insist on a reading of the Jesus story that names nationalism as idolatry certainly may lead to trouble.

This trumpet-blowing nationalism now rallies behind the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Outspoken witness to a faith that rejects warfare may well seem just as seditious today as it did in the 16th century.

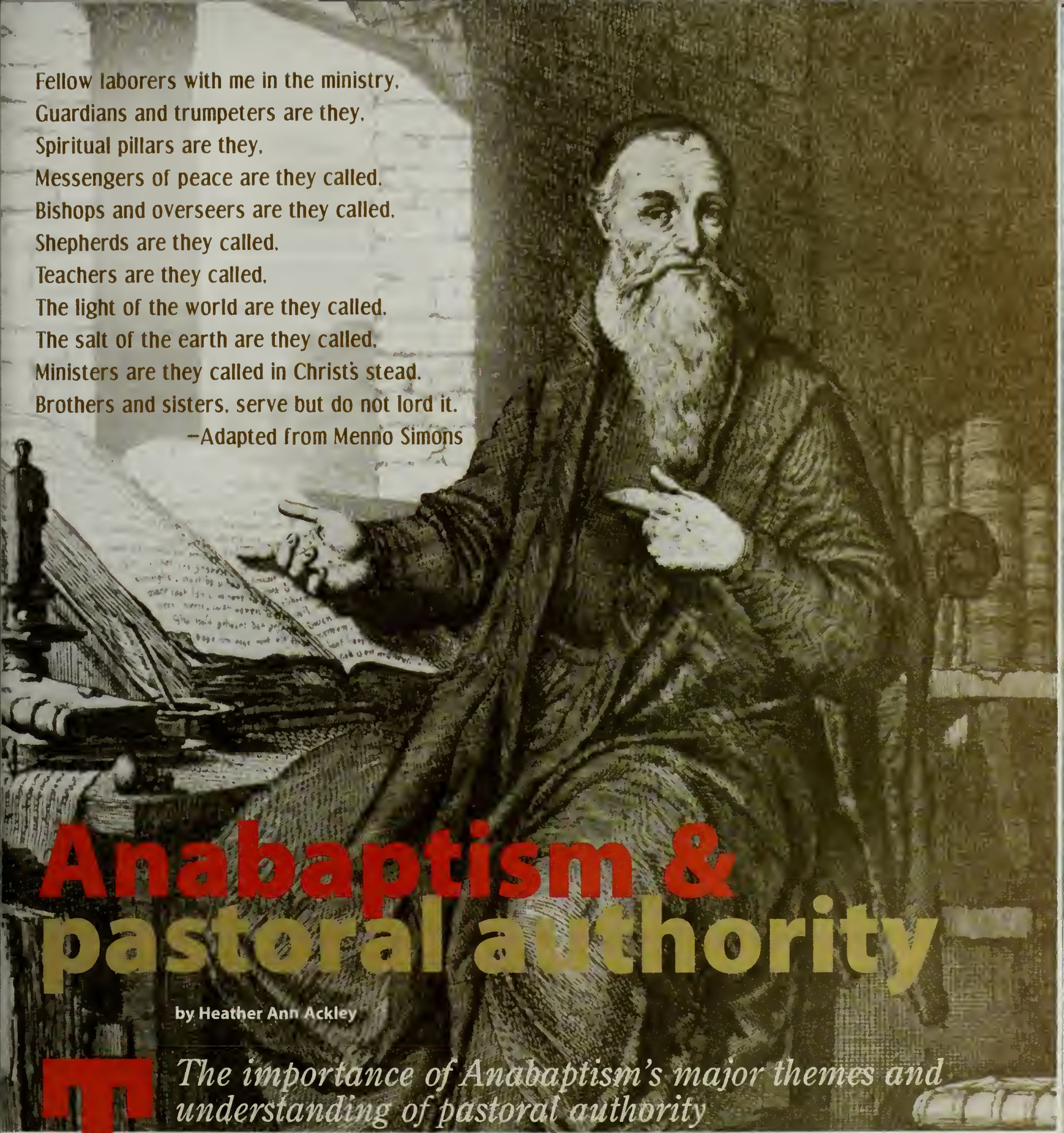
Our national political culture—through leaders grasping for dominating power, closely guarding the secrecy of policy deliberations, working to institute one-party rule, seeking to intimidate and thereby silent media scrutiny—moves ever closer to authoritarianism. To insist that genuine power flows from the bottom up goes against this grain.

And our economic system continues to extract wealth from the world's people and put it into the hands of the already wealthy and powerful in the name of "free trade" and "privatization." Our economic system empowers corporations to seek the lowest possible labor costs and exploit nature with impunity. For Anabaptist Christians to practice economic sharing and simplicity, care for the earth and point out the evils of hoarding wealth is to witness against some of the most tenaciously "religious" beliefs in our culture.

Ezekiel Maadou Traoré (left), pastor of the Kotoura Mennonite Church, and Abdias Coulibaly, national president of Burkina Faso's Mennonite Church, baptize Aminata Traoré, one of 25 new members received into the church in September 2004. Mennonite Church USA

Core Anabaptist convictions are relevant and potent today. The past of Anabaptist ideals is not dead; it is not even past. As in the 16th century, people today who seek to live according to these ideals need strength to do so. May God grant us such strength, and may we share it with each other.

Ted Grimsrud teaches theology at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and is a member of Shalom Mennonite Congregation in Harrisonburg and an ordained minister in Central District Conference.



Fellow laborers with me in the ministry.
Guardians and trumpeters are they.
Spiritual pillars are they.
Messengers of peace are they called.
Bishops and overseers are they called.
Shepherds are they called.
Teachers are they called.
The light of the world are they called.
The salt of the earth are they called.
Ministers are they called in Christ's stead.
Brothers and sisters, serve but do not lord it.
—Adapted from Menno Simons

Anabaptism & pastoral authority

by Heather Ann Ackley

The importance of Anabaptism's major themes and understanding of pastoral authority

The key themes of an Anabaptist understanding of pastoral leadership center on the relationship between ministerial leadership and the church as the body of Christ. The first of these is the need for "uniformity and clarity" of polity created by the integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, which had different leadership traditions (Mennonite Polity, see "Works Cited," page 15). That process has led to this polity's "new protocol" of shared three-part leadership (Mennonite Polity). This tripartite leadership model is based on Hebrew, early Christian and Anabaptist precedents (Mennonite Polity).

Continued on page 14

Our pastoral relationships are to be characterized by courtesy, honor, respect and purity.

Continued from page 13

The second key theme is the grounding of congregational leadership and polity in our biblical and historical Anabaptist belief and tradition: "Discipline, structure and organization consistent with the gospel of Christ are … required to equip the church for ministry" (Mennonite Polity).

The third theme, closely intertwined with the first two, is that ministry belongs to the church as a whole. Thus, the universal priesthood of believers is affirmed, as are the tripartite leadership model and the church's discernment and guidance of the individual's "call" (Mennonite Polity).

These three themes come together in historical Anabaptist Christocentrism (Christ-centeredness) and its relational understanding of our Christian faith, particularly the emphasis on discipleship. In relation to ministerial leadership, this means emphasizing the servanthood of pastors, a biblical understanding of discipleship as inner service to God, personal devotion that bears fruits of mercy, justice and righteousness (Mennonite Polity). As Menno Simons affirmed, ministers are "messengers of peace" and "servants" rather than high priestly, glorified heirs of "a formal tradition of apostolic succession" (Mennonite Polity). The life of a disciple, including a pastor, is an ongoing, reciprocal, responsive relationship between the servant and her Lord. Congregations and pastoral leaders may need to be led to view this Anabaptist confessional emphasis on servanthood as an equal, even greater, part of one's ministerial duties.

The life of a disciple, including a pastor, is an ongoing, reciprocal, responsive relationship between the servant and her Lord.

An Anabaptist Christocentric view of pastoral leadership contrasts with business, academic and political polity and leadership models: Majority rule and an "employer/employee mentality" in the church diverge from truly Anabaptist, Mennonite and biblical beliefs and historical practices of consensus, spiritual discernment and mutual submission (Mennonite Polity). Congregational expectations of a business model of action-oriented ministry that can be logged hourly and evaluated for cost-efficiency may work up to a point, but the congregation's understanding of servanthood as the pastor's correct biblical emphasis must always be promoted by the pastor, the pastor's family and the conference and denominational leadership.

The role and authority of pastoral leadership in Mennonite Church USA: A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership admits that ordination is not necessarily biblical, lacks clear support in the Christian tradition until the third century and is not even present in early Anabaptist confessions (Mennonite Polity). However, ordained ministerial leadership has become a tradition in Christian churches generally, including Mennonite Church USA. Therefore, the denomination has outlined a biblically based model of servant leadership with particular emphasis on Jesus Christ's teachings and example with regard to dealing with conflict. Jesus' sermon on Christian relationships (Matthew 18:15-20) is central to the Anabaptist understanding of appropriate relationships within the body of Christ. Following the teachings of Jesus in this sermon, the Mennonite polity document reminds us that we are to deal with conflict privately, directly, respectfully and lovingly, going first to the brother or sister with whom we are experiencing conflict. Our pastoral relationships are to be characterized by courtesy, honor, respect and purity, the polity exhorts, citing 1 Timothy, where we are exhorted to "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Timothy 6:11).

It would help to lance the boil of dysfunctional communication in and among our Anabaptist churches, with their phobia about directly confronting conflicts, to add Ephesians 4:15, mentioned elsewhere in the polity ("By speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we grow up in every way to Christ, who is our head") and include in the polity document the more strongly worded texts against indirect communication, e.g. Philippians 2:14: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings" and James 1:26: "If anyone among you seems religious and doesn't bridle her tongue, but deceives her own heart, this one's religion is vain." These exhortations seem to be the biblical underpinnings of the polity handbook's guidelines for communication. Even for "pastoral" reasons, such as leading group prayer, the confidentiality of others in the congregation, denomination and world is to be respected, not violated.

Sometimes this is not as clear as our polity document seems to suggest; however, our polity helped me understand why people reacted negatively when I was first licensed to ministry and not yet familiar with these guidelines. For example, in my first month or two of pastoral service, I asked the congregation to pray for a person who was ill. The person had phoned me to request prayer and support from me but had not said anything about the rest of the congregation. The polity document clarifies the boundaries in a situation like this. Following its guidelines, I soon understood that I can ask the congregation to pray for a person in need only when that person has specifically asked or given permission that their need be shared. Otherwise, the matter is private.

Likewise, at first I asked for clarification on relational issues by sharing conversations between conference representatives and me or between members of the leadership team with the congregation. The polity handbook reminded me that the "Jesus way" (outlined in Matthew 18) for dealing with such confusions and conflicts is to go first to the source, communicating directly and privately. During this same, early pastoral period, I also tried to intervene gently or mediate unobtrusively in conflicts between congregants or between the congregation and the conference. Like Jesus' sermon in Matthew 18, the polity handbook explains that it is appropriate to do this only when invited to do so by both parties and only after doing everything possible to encourage them to communicate with each other directly.

Another helpful point in our polity handbook is the assertion that area ministers and other conference administrators must share information with other conferences and denominations in order to respect the integrity of the office in which they have been called to serve. This is not a boundary violation or "triangling" but a holistic approach to conference ministry.

Area ministers and other conference administrators must share information with other conferences and denominations in order to respect the integrity of the office in which they have been called to serve.

Finally, I appreciate the warning to speak the truth about oneself "wisely." While I often share part of my personal testimony as part of preaching and teaching in order to witness to the power of God's redeeming love in my life, due to the nature of my experiences the warning not to speak too explicitly about certain personal, private matters and experiences is relevant (Mennonite Polity). To speak too explicitly about certain topics is a violation of the office in which others have called their pastor to serve.

A biblical metaphor: When preparing for a preordination exam administered by the conference in which I was licensed, I sought a biblical verse to describe the Anabaptist vision for ministry, prayerfully letting my New Testament fall open, looking for the first words of Jesus the Holy Spirit showed me. My eyes rested on Mark 11:2: "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here." Though it seems so inapplicable, the verse reminds me that we Anabaptists have not yet fully realized our ideal. Anabaptists believe we are called to "go into the village opposite us," the kingdom of God rather than "the city of Man." Immediately as we enter, Jesus assures us, we will find what he has sent us after. Further, the colt "on which no one yet has ever sat" may be a good metaphor for the community that Jesus preached to us but that we have failed to realize. Anabaptists have tried from the beginning to be this church, but we haven't really slipped comfortably down in the saddle and ridden out our value system, our relationship with Jesus, our submission to God. "Untie it and bring it here," he commands. Maybe this is a verse to call Anabaptist pastors and churches into the 21st century.

Heather Ann Ackley is associate professor of theology at Azusa (Calif.) Pacific University.

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5 in a series of six

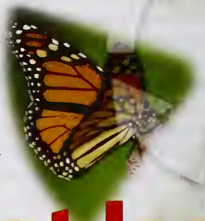
Holistic Stewardship

The stewardship of talent

A piano major in college frequently performed in local churches on weekends. Often people brought fledgling students to meet the musician and be inspired by his technique. And some said a variation of this: "When I get to heaven, I am going to play the piano just like you."

To the pianist, it seemed an odd thing to say. It is difficult to imagine a heaven where every person has the same talents, where millions flawlessly execute a concerto or act the lead in a heavenly play or speak with the skills of an orator. Heaven would be a boring place if everyone had identical abilities. So the pianist's response to those people took them by surprise: "Oh, I certainly hope not. I hope that in heaven you will be perfectly content to use your own unique talents."

Many of us think of "gifts" and "talents" as the same. But according to Bob Lichty, MMA field marketing manager, in his book *Talent Show: Your Faith in Full Color*, these two words are different in God's eyes. "God gave us both our spiritual gifts and our talents," he writes. "The key to understanding the difference is that we should be using our God-given talents to fulfill the purpose of our God-given gifts."



We tend to look on talent from a limited perspective. We see football quarterbacks, inspiring public speakers and musicians as talented. Sometimes these public abilities seem enviable. Even if we possess the knack for growing things, an innate sense of how to counsel someone or the skill to repair a car—it may seem second-rate compared with a moving musician or a captivating communicator.

MMA

The door that lea

by Roy E. Bronkema

But in Scripture no talent is considered second-rate. The best model of a church is not one or two superstars employing their genius while everyone else sits back to relax. It is a whole body of people—all uniquely capable, all special, all bringing those varied talents to benefit the whole, and all combining to bring God glory. This is illustrated well in the following story by Gary Inrig in his book *Life in His Body*:

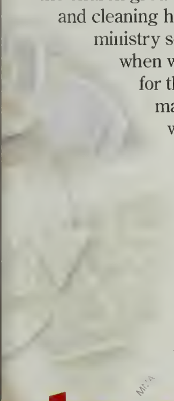
"Several years ago, two students graduated from the Chicago-Kent College of Law. The highest ranking student in the class was a blind man named Overton, and when he received his honor he insisted that half the credit should go to his friend Kaspryzak. They had met one another in school when the armless Mr. Kaspryzak had guided the blind Mr. Overton down a flight of stairs. This acquaintance ripened into friendship and a beautiful example of interdependence. The blind man carried the books that the armless man read aloud in their common study, and thus the individual deficiency of each was compensated for by the other."

Those two gentlemen innately felt the need to lean on each other, and that combination proved to benefit both.

They had learned the first basic principle of ministry: Talent is to serve God and God's body. In 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV) we read, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." Talents are not to lift us up but to exalt the giver of the talents. And when the body works together, all abilities dovetail to create a tapestry of immense beauty and completeness. Like Kaspryzak and Overton, we meet each other's needs and make up for each other's deficiencies.

Nearly every talent can make a dramatic statement to the body of Christ.

s to ministry



This has all kinds of practical implications to the church. Nearly every talent can make a dramatic statement to the body of Christ. For example, a car mechanic may repair the cars of widows for free. Cooking can help provide for those in crisis so that those in pain don't have to worry about meals. Gardeners may use their green thumbs to care for the church grounds. Talents of caring, counseling and cleaning have ready-made opportunities in ministry settings. As referenced in John 13:35, when we decide how and where to plug in for the benefit of the body of Christ, it makes a dramatic statement to the world: "Oh how they love one another!" In the words of the musician Stevie Wonder: "We all have ability. The difference is how we use it."

We have all been designed uniquely by God, not for our own gratification but to build up God's people and kingdom. We should choose to use our talents in God's service. And when we do, wonderful ministry occurs. And when we combine our talents with the other stewardship areas—leveraging time, health, relationships and money to make them more effective—even more dynamic things happen in the church.

Take, for example, the story of one congregation: When a talented musician decided to combine his skills with other talented band members in effective relationship, incredible things happened—ministry that would not have been nearly as effective with just one person. Week after week, the musicians gave their time, relationships and health to minister to the local church. Worship was enhanced. Ultimately someone wanted to make a financial gift, so they donated a grand piano to the church. Every stewardship area was affected for good.

Second, use of our talents should be motivated by a strong relationship with God, not a compensation for spiritual emptiness. Our service is a response of love to God, not to earn points with the Holy One. Peter was emphatic that ministry was a grateful response arising from a good relationship with God, not a means of earning something. 1 Peter 4:11 (NIV) says, "If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised." The glory of God is the preeminent thing.

Well-known basketball coach John Wooden said, "Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there." Composer Irving Berlin put it another way: "Talent is only the starting point." The talent may get you a platform, but it will be a strong relationship with God and strong character that will gain continued respect.

Finally, talent is not to be buried but invested. It is to be carefully stewarded. In his parable of the talents, Jesus had stern words for the man who buried his "talent" in the ground rather than cultivating and growing it. God does not give anything to see it wasted; he desires that we learn to maximize it. Hidden talent counts for nothing.

Every stewardship area can be tapped to achieve synergy in the church. Time and money should be used to cultivate expertise—the church should be known for the development and effective use of our talents. Relationships can be leveraged to discover gifts and talents in a congregation. Churches must learn to steward the talent potential in their young people, harness the energy and enthusiasm of young couples and transition well so the older generation is tapped for wisdom, prayer and teaching.

Humorist and author Erma Bombeck articulated a worthy goal, when she said, "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left and could say, I used everything you gave me." May we steward our talents well so God is glorified.

Roy E. Bronkema is a free-lance writer specializing in work for churches and Christian organizations. Roy and Nancy, his wife, reside in Niles, Mich. Next month's article will explore the holistic stewardship of money.

Associated resources

MMA has resources that can help people manage their God-given gifts in a variety of ways:

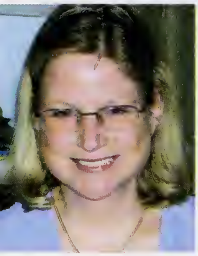
Talent Show: Your Faith in Full Color by Bob Lichty (Herald Press, 2005).

Educational resources available at http://bookstore.mma-online.org.

Local representatives throughout the country offer insurance and financial products and services.

Local MMA Stewardship University events (look under Education and Resources at MMA-online.org for the latest schedule).

5 thoughts on numbers in headlines



Debra Sapp-Yarwood is a member of Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan.

The other morning, as I was living in the world (but not of it, of course), watching a morning news program, I had an epiphany regarding *The Mennonite*. The topic was competition among magazines to increase readership, and the guest "expert" revealed that one trend is to translate articles into lists or otherwise get numbers into headlines. At the grocery checkout, people will buy a magazine boasting "255 Decorating Tips Under $50" but not one entitled "Decorating on a Budget." "Busy people want to know exactly what they'll get from a magazine," the expert said.

The Feb. 21 issue of *The Mennonite* was handy, so I translated headlines. The first article was "Thank You for Zebra Mussels, Asian Ladybugs and Sharing?" It challenged us to be more discerning about our verbal contributions during the sharing portion of worship, and it also challenged the necessity for sharing time all together.

There are two ways to alter this essay successfully, but you'll want to ignore the author's intent. You may address it to those who share: "23 Ways to Share Joys and Crises More Succinctly During Worship." Or you may address it to those who listen: "12 Foolproof Ways to Stay Attentive During Sharing Time." These can be companion articles in the same edition.

The next article, "Chattering Monkeys, Trembling Hands and Loving Embraces," was about a student chaplain's exploration of contemplative prayer. Since she conveniently revealed her tenure in this pursuit, it is easily transformed: "3 Weeks to Spiritual Enlightenment."

Bold numbers: I figured the cover required one more article with bold numbers, so I found "MC USA Should Focus on Immigration Issues, say Pacific Southwest Leaders." I hadn't read the article before because of the unremarkable headline. (I should admit here that I am not a good Mennonite who reads every word issued from headquarters just on principle or faith.) As it turned out, that piece contained many numbers.

Suddenly my epiphany turned on me; I was no longer conceiving a parody on how the popular press has cheapened communication. I read solemnly that U.S. House of Representatives Resolution 4437 was threatening to criminalize those who aid undocumented aliens. It had passed the House, and if it became law our southern California pastors, whose congregations contain many illegal residents, would be felons. "Fifty pastors will go to jail," said Pacific Southwest Conference minister Jeff Wright. Wright explained that 86 percent of the congregants in his conference were born outside the United States, and 92 percent are racial-ethnic. They are worshiping in more than 44 congregations in three regions. My head swam with numbers—HR 4437, 50 pastors, 86 percent, 92 percent, 44, 3. The article ended abruptly.

Mennospeak: If the popular press has cheapened communication by overusing numbers, then maybe we (who are not so popular but possibly too polite) cheapen it when we omit or downplay appropriate numbers and as a result everything blends together. As a newcomer to this faith, a convert, I am vaguely discomfited when peace loving subtly transforms into conflict avoiding. Among my Mennonite friends, I call it Mennospeak: a politeness that conceals another meaning, sometimes political but more often a personal opinion that might offend. Most of the time, this kind of communication is bemusing and innocuous, but other times it hides or marginalizes important messages.

I missed an important article because its headline was written in classic Mennospeak. Do established Mennonites, like converts, also miss important news? Regardless, our church's message will never reach beyond our parochial limits to other potential newcomers until we communicate clearly —neither in the world nor of the world but for its benefit. The headline for that article likely should have been "50 Pastors May Become Felons Under New Law," and the copy should have provided a sense of direction from the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA.

The Mennonite has a difficult task. Most of the time it balances sensitivity and directness. Christ's words in the Scripture often float like poetry; other times they sting like nails. It is incumbent on modern-day scribes to follow his example in communicating the vision of a church that is both humble and vital. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Martial arts for making peace**—Everett J. Thomas
- **Converted by the church**—Ryan Ahlgrim

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Legislators want letters from Mennonites

March 27 demonstration in Washington includes MC USA representatives.

Immigration reform must be fair.
Mennonite Church
rants
Si
alizacion
inmigrantes

Mennonite Central Committee

Eastern Mennonite University senior Valerie Showalter participates in a public witness for immigration reform in Washington March 27

Mennonite Church USA was represented by some ministers and other members at a March 27 clergy public witness to promote immigrants' rights at the Capitol in Washington. The ecumenical witness called for fair legislation and a path to citizenship for those without status or documentation, family reunification and worker rights.

Those in attendance represented clergy from a diverse faith spectrum, including Catholics, Jews, Methodists, Mennonites and Buddhists, among others, said peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA Susan Mark Landis, who attended the event.

"I saw this as a public witness to my faith," Landis says. "It was unifying to see this many clergy who say that God cares profoundly about the oppressed, that God cares deeply about how we treat the least among us."

In addition, this witness was significant because of those participating primarily were clergy and represented between 20 and 30 states.

"It was important to me that this was a religious witness and that it was clergy working together to tell legislators this is what religious leaders think and to be able to show that kind of spiritual leadership," Landis says.

Organizers estimate between 3,000 and 5,000 people attended the event, which was planned in response to pending legislation with House Resolution 4437 that at the time had the potential to criminalize anyone offering support or aid to a person without status. The bill was held up in the Senate, which was unable to determine a resolution, and may not resurface for several months.

The legislation spurred Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board and executive leadership staff to call on Mennonite Church USA members to contact their lawmakers and encourage fair immigration reform.

Landis—who was credentialed as a Mennonite Church USA minister shortly before attending the witness—said she sees many reasons for Mennonite Church USA supporting and advocating for fair immigration reform.

"The first is that God calls us to care. The second is that many undocumented immigrants are our brothers and sisters in Mennonite Church USA and the Christian community," she says. "Third, our economic well-being as a country depends on immigrant labor, although they should receive fair wages. Fourth, it's only fair. Most of us are immigrants, and our country has been built on the backs of immigrants."

In addition to demonstrating her support for her undocumented brothers and sisters at the witness, Landis was able to meet with legislative aids for Sen. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, and Rep. Ralph Regula, D-Ohio. Those meetings provided significant insight to Landis on how Mennonite Church USA can work to improve immigrants' situations in their communities, she says.

Landis says she was told lawmakers are receiving an overwhelming number of hate letters from constituents who are fearful of immigrants and think they're siphoning jobs from Americans. Legislative aids encouraged Landis to spread the word to Mennonites that they need to receive letters with a different perspective if they are to vote differently. It's letters like those, Landis says, that should inspire Mennonite Church USA members to work toward learning about the issue and how it affects their communities and then work to educate others.

Lawmakers are receiving an overwhelming number of hate letters from constituents who are fearful of immigrants.
—Susan Mark Landis

"Immigration is a very, very complicated issue. We don't deny it's complicated and that there are no simple solutions. We need to take into account that we're talking about human beings, their families and our overlapping economic situations," Landis says.

"We need to continue contacting our representatives and look around our communities and look for ways God is calling us to witness love to everyone in our communities. Especially in the midst of complex issues, Christians are called to show God's love," Landis says.—*Marathana Prothro of Mennonite Church USA*

Program shows both sides of border

NAFTA is a primary cause of illegal immigration says mission worker.

Courtesy photo

Part of our mission is to create equal, just relationships between people from Latin America and the United States. —Miriam Miller

In recent weeks thousands of people have taken to the streets in cities across the United States, rallying for the rights of immigrants. Behind each face is a story of desperation and hope that cannot be restrained by man-made boundaries.These are the stories BorderLinks, a Tucson, Ariz., nonprofit group, hopes to make real.

BorderLinks is dedicated to educating people on both sides of the fence about border issues through its learning trips. Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) participant Miriam Miller serves as a facilitator for the program, which she says is "an exchange of knowledge where both parties gain and both become more equipped to fight for justice."

Miller helps translate conversations that enable friendships that cross barriers made by borders, cultures and languages.

"Part of our mission is to create equal, just relationships between people from Latin America and the United States," she says.

Learning trips help expose and eliminate prejudices picked up in the media. Often, Miller says, Latinos become the scapegoat for U.S. economic and social problems. That scapegoating, and "basic racism that is engrained in all of us, are the reasons that education is one of the most essential parts of fighting the injustices of the world."

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, between 11 and 12 million undocumented migrants currently live in the United States. A large percentage are from Mexico, Central America and other South American nations.

Learning trips put Americans in touch with just a few of these faces and the stories behind their long trek north. Mateo, for example, came from Guatemala to Arizona overland with his pregnant wife. After a year in the United States, Mateo was deported. Yet his wife and infant son remained behind. When Mateo met MVS participant Mark Wasser through BorderLinks, he was determined to make it back to them. Or die trying.

"These people and this issue are so often presented as statistics that it's easy to dehumanize them," Wasser says. "I will never be able to do that again."

A fence of corrugated tin, cement and chain link weaves its way across the Sonora Desert. It is meant to keep immigrants from crossing illegally from Mexico to Arizona. It doesn't. In broad daylight, Wasser watched a man approach the barrier from the Mexico side and clamber over, a look of fear and desperation in his eyes. Why the desperation to come to the United States?

Cecelia Guzmán, Miller's Mexican counterpart for BorderLinks trips, explains. She remembers when her brothers and husband had jobs working for local business—the railroad, construction, hotel industry and banking. All that changed when NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) passed in 1994. Many Mexican businesses have been bought out by American companies, Guzmán says. Others haven't been able to compete and have simply gone under. Agricultural products are exported and local restaurants give way to fast-food franchises imported from the United States.—*Bethany Keener for Mennonite Mission Network*

"The feasibility study was incredibly helpful in our capital campaign. It told us the community believed in us and valued the proposed building project. It defined a realistic goal for our fundraising. Jerry Kennell was great to work with."

Nancy Hopkins-Garriss
Executive Director
Pleasant View, Inc.
Broadway, Virginia

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Canadians confront immigration issues

Ontario congregation calls on Parliament to uphold the law, open border.

REFUGEES HAVE

D. Michael Hostetler

Jim Hett addresses the press at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church's sixth annual Palm Sunday Peace Pilgrimage.

While most congregations celebrate Palm Sunday in the warmth and safety of their places of worship, Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church took their celebration to the streets of Kitchener, Ontario, during its sixth annual Palm Sunday Peace Pilgrimage.

The event recognized Jesus' arrival—as Prince of Peace into Jerusalem—with reflections, prayers, songs and street theater. The theme for this year's walk was an outgrowth of the congregation's concern for refugees in the land.

The walk was led by Kevin Peters Unrau, one of the pastors at Stirling Avenue, and the event included three stops. Speakers at each location reflected how we people of faith should join hands with the refugees of the land. The event was planned by the congregation's peace and justice working group.

Approximately 40 church and community members of all ages joined in the walk. The first stop was city hall, where Jim Hett read a prepared statement on the plight of refugees in Canada. The walkers then participated in street theater reenacting Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem.

At the second stop at Victoria Park, Oz Cole-Arnal, a professor at the Waterloo (Ontario) Lutheran Theological Seminary spoke on the "Safe Third Country Agreement between the United States and Canada."

He offered background information and the effects the agreement has had on the numbers of refugees entering Canada from the United States. Walkers created a mobile using keys symbolizing the closing of the Canadian border to many refugees.

The walkers made their final stop at the Working Centre, which houses the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support program. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2001 established the Refugee Appeal Division; however, it has never been implemented. Kristen Mathies, the daughter of a refugee, spoke on the Refugee Appeal Division. Mathies raised concerns about the injustice in the system and the need to hold the Canadian Parliament accountable to laws already in place.

Walkers signed a petition requesting that this legislation be implemented. The group concluded this stop by writing messages of encouragement to the refugees who come to the Mennonite Coalition for support and assistance.—*D. Michael Hostetler*

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2001 established the Refugee Appeal Division; however, it has never been implemented. —D. Michael Hostetler

Nuclear nonproliferation

Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag joined other religious leaders in March by signing a letter that will go to all major 2008 presidential candidates encouraging them to make nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament a major campaign issue. The letter states nuclear weapons are inherently immoral because they kill "innocent people and ravage the environment." After pointing out that solutions to the problem of nuclear weapons must be international, the letter asks candidates for the following four commitments:

- Reaffirm support for international approaches.
- Prevent terrorists and hostile states from obtaining nuclear weapons.
- Prevent nuclear attack on the United States from afar.
- Work with other nations to achieve nuclear disarmament.

"Other Christian denominations are looking to Mennonite Church USA for help in dealing with both the mindset and the hardware involved in warfare," Schrag says. "We join as signatories for this initiative, realizing the broad ambition of such a discussion, believing it is consistent with the peace teaching of our Confession of Faith."

Other groups with signers include: American Baptist Churches, Episcopal Church; Churches of Christ in the USA; Presbyterian Church USA; Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations; United Methodist General Board of Church and Society; Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy; Leadership Conference of Women Religious and Pax Christi USA.
—*Mennonite Church USA*

Mosquito nets save Tanzanian lives

MEDA creates business incentives for shopkeepers to maintain supply.

MEDA photo

Evelina Maligana in her bedroom with her mosquito net

> Giving away free nets harms more than it helps because it removes the commercial incentive.
> —Greg Foster

Evelina Maligana, an expectant mother in the remote village of Mudemu, Tanzania, opens her hut made of branches and clay and invites visitors inside. In her sparse bedroom a new cone-shaped funnel of blue mesh hangs from the ceiling. She proudly tells the visitors the net will keep her new infant safe from the anopheles mosquito, a dangerous predator that spreads malaria.

Maligana is one of more than a million pregnant mothers in Tanzania who have acquired an insecticide-treated net (ITN) through a special partnership between the country's ministry of health and Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). The program, called Hati Punguzo, aims to put affordable ITNs within reach of every pregnant woman and infant in the country to help battle the country's leading health menace.

Malaria claims an African life every 30 seconds —nearly 3,000 a day—rivaling HIV/AIDS. So far there is no effective vaccine against the disease. The best prevention is a mosquito net treated with insecticide. Maligana heard about Hati Punguzo when she went for a check-up at the village maternity clinic and was given a voucher that she took to a nearby retail shop. The voucher did not give her a free ITN but covered 2,750 shillings (about $2.60), which she could "top-up" with about 50 cents. Her physician credits the voucher program with dramatically boosting the use of ITNs. Before the program started, his clinic saw 60 to 80 malaria patients per month. Now they get only a few.

In another region ITN use by pregnant women soared from 16 percent before the program started to 95 percent now, says Dr. Miriam Ongara, district medical officer in Kibaha region.

"This is well beyond the UN's Millennium Goal for ITN usage—and 10 years early," she says, adding that in the past year no one in her district has died from malaria.

The program grew out of MEDA's efforts to explore how business could play a role in health care. Jerry Quigley, MEDA's director of production-marketing linkages, and Greg Foster, MEDA's Tanzania director, developed a public-private partnership built on expanding commercial networks. Behind the act of getting a voucher into the hands of pregnant women is an enormous logistical task, managed by MEDA, involving 4,000 public health clinics. Some are remote and impossible to reach during the rainy season. Equally important are the 3,000 retailers who stock the nets and ensure a supply, even in rural areas.

"A year ago it was very difficult to buy a net in the rural areas," says Foster. "Now there are 3,000 distributors selling nets, 80 percent of whom weren't selling nets before. For the first time, ITNs are now available in most regions of the country."

In 2005, the first year of the program, 1 million vouchers were distributed to clinics. This year the goal is 1.5 million. The redemption rate for those that have found their way into the hands of expectant mothers averages 87 percent.

So far, other countries have been slow to replicate the approach. Some have used giveaway programs sponsored by large international agencies. Foster thinks such handouts impede sustainability.

"Giving away free nets harms more than it helps because it removes the commercial incentive that ensures a long-term supply after donor money is no longer available to pay for the nets," he says.

"Try to convince a retailer to sell nets," adds Quigley, "when they are being given out next door for free. It won't happen. The main reason why nets are now available everywhere in Tanzania is because retail shops have found it worthwhile to stock, transport and maintain a reliable supply for customers year-round."

In addition, Quigley says, studies have shown that people are more likely to use ITNs when they pay something for them.

"Even the simple act of going to the store and choosing an ITN is one small way to regain dignity as they make a key decision affecting the health of their families," says Quigley.—*Wally Kroeker for MEDA*

Valley of death for mission workers

Denied entry to Uganda, medical doctors accept assignment in Sudan.

Phil and Linda Byler often thought they would become missionaries earlier in life, but it wasn't until they hit their 50s that God freed them up to close their thriving medical practice in Williamsport, Pa., and head to Uganda with Africa Inland Mission (AIM) and Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) in January 2004.

For years they had taken short-term medical mission trips with their four children. During one such trip to Uganda, Phil and Linda began to sense a clear call to the Muslim Aringa people of the West Nile region. They believed God was inviting them to invest the rest of their lives in full-time cross-cultural mission work among some of the world's least-reached peoples.

They settled into the Kei Health Center, in a remote region near the Sudan border. Then their call took an unexpected turn.

"After only three weeks," Linda says, we walked through the valley of the shadow of death."

"Our shadow of death was the shocking reality of the death of our missionary colleagues, Donna and Warren Pett," Phil says. "The had been brutally murdered on the evening of March 17, 2004, by 10 armed men."

As the Bylers watched the blood-soaked bodies of their co-workers being loaded into the airplane, the reality of death gripped them. In a testimony shared with the EMM board on March 31, the Bylers shared their own version of Psalm 23. This was their "valley of the shadow of death."

Evacuated to Arua while authorities investigated the murders, the Bylers were filled with questions about their own future. Who had done this? Why had it happened? Linda was drawn to the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, realizing afresh that many were faithful to God in difficult circumstances, yet died without seeing the promise.

"I struggled with why two such lovely people would be killed by the very people that they were giving their all to love and to serve," Phil says. "I was drawn to Jesus, and the even worse incongruity of his innocent death at the hands of those whom he came to love and to serve."

During the next months the Bylers struggled to find their next assignment. They studied the Aringa language, got involved in medical and administrative work, preaching and teaching. Slowly they began making one-, then two-day trips back to the Kei Health Center. This became new "paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

As their first two-year term drew to a close, the Bylers were still clinging to their call to the Aringa people, believing God would restore it. Then weeks before departure, the door slammed shut. They would not be invited to return. They left for a seminar in Kenya, grieving the loss and churning with questions about future options.

One free day, they wandered out into the semi-arid region where they were staying and suddenly came upon an old British farmstead that was covered with green grass, brilliant tropical flowers and pools of water.

"We stayed for hours, absorbing the marvelous beauty," Phil says. "The unanswered questions seemed far less pressing. And the looming possibility of Sudan seemed permeated with a wonder of peace and possibility."

With a new sense of clarity, the Bylers accepted an invitation to serve as team leaders for an AIM team in southern Sudan, still associated with EMM.

They are embracing this new call and all its unknowns with joy because "surely goodness and mercy will follow them all the days of their lives, and they will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

For the next year the Bylers will live in Lokichogio, Kenya, with plans to move into Torit, Sudan, as soon as that becomes possible.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

> I struggled with why two such lovely people would be killed by the very people that they were giving their all to love and to serve.—Phil Byler

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Sabbath Rest and Sunday Worship: Relevance for Christians, Dr. Maureena Fritz, NDS, President, Bat Kol Institute; Professor Emerita, St. Michael's University College, University of Toronto School of Theology.

Challenges for Today's Church in Relating to Jews and Israel, Rev. Michael McGarry, CSP, Rector, Tantur Ecumenical Institute.

Jesus at Prayer: Christians and Jewish Spirituality, Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman, Founder of Kol HaNeshama Synagogue; Lecturer, Hebrew Union College and Bat Kol Institute.

MCC provides trauma training in Nepal

War between Maoists and government leaves victims without hope, future.

Manohar Pathak

Promot-Nepal
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20-23, 2006

Carolyn Heggen leads trauma healing trainings in Nepal earlier this year with health workers, pastors, community leaders and staff with United Mission to Nepal.

Tensions are running high in Nepal, with a decade-old Maoist insurgency battling government officials for control of the South Asian nation. Violence has risen since a cease fire ended in January. In February, only weeks after violent attacks, including one in Tansen, a town in western Nepal, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) sent psychotherapist Carolyn Heggen to conduct trauma healing trainings for health workers, pastors, community leaders and staff for United Mission to Nepal (UMN).

"The people were so anxious to learn. They were desperate for some skills to deal with the trauma in themselves and to know how to help their community," says Heggen, who was with MCC in Nepal from 2002 to 2004 and now lives in Corvallis, Ore.

Tansen has been the site of a UMN hospital for more than 50 years. Participants in the trainings told Heggen that they could hear shooting in the city from 10:30 p.m. one night until 6 a.m. the next day. One father described how he spent the night under the bed with his wife and two young sons, praying and singing hymns to calm themselves. They stepped out of the house only to see three corpses. How, he and others wanted to know, do you talk to children about death and violence?

Part of Heggen's role was to explain some of the possible and normal effects of trauma and help participants recognize these signs in themselves or in the people they encounter.

After a traumatic event, some people have trouble sleeping. Some experience chills or shaking. They may twitch their lips or grind their teeth. Many people understand fear or emotional distress follow a traumatic event. However, it is critical that people know these physical symptoms can also be normal responses to violence or trauma.

Sometimes, the stories people tell about trauma can continue to undermine their healing and take away their sense of power and hope. An important component of healing trauma lies in transforming their story of what has happened.

Heggen shared stories of trauma and had participants work at retelling them in ways that highlight courage and build hope. "It is important to listen carefully as people tell their stories and help them make the shift from toxic versions that keep them powerless to stories that heal and empower them to move on with their lives," Heggen said.

Heggen also had participants identify the losses they had experienced because of the violence in Nepal. In addition to losing loved ones and belongings, people said they had also lost hope for the future and trust.

"This war has gone on for so long that many don't have hope it can be any different," Heggen said. Others said they didn't know who is on which side and therefore had trouble trusting anyone.

"I would ask people, 'Where is the hope?' or 'What's it going to take for things to get better?' They'd just look at me and say, 'I don't know,'" Heggen says.

In this context, though, compassionate listening and helping people turn stories of pain into stories of hope can become a powerful tool. "It's something they can do. They probably can't change the political system of Nepal or stop the Maoist revolution. At least now, they seem to feel they have something they can do to deal with the people who have suffered so much," Heggen says—*Marla Pierson Lester for Mennonite Central Committee*

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Choir festival draws nearly 600 students

Seventeen Mennonite high schools send their choirs to the 44th annual event.

Nearly 600 high school students from 17 Mennonite high schools across the United States and Canada gathered at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School April 7-9 for the 44th annual Mennonite Schools Council High School Choir Festival. The event culminated with concerts on the final day that featured selections by individual choirs as well as the combined group.

The guest conductor for the event was Jerry Blackstone, director of choirs and chair of the conducting department at the University of Michigan (U-M). He has conducted choir festivals all over the country. Piano accompanist was Douglas Bomberger, head of the music department at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College.

Participating schools in addition to Lancaster Mennonite High School were Sarasota (Fla.) Christian School; Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; Freeman (S.D.) Academy; Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, Iowa; Bethany Christian School, Goshen, Ind.; Central Christian School, Kidron, Ohio; Lake Center Christian School, Hartville, Ohio; Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Va.; Shalom Christian School, Chambersburg, Pa.; Conestoga Christian School, Morgantown, Pa.; Philadelphia Mennonite High School; Christopher Dock Mennonite School, Lansdale, Pa.; Belleville (Pa.) Mennonite School; Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ontario; and United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, Ontario.—*Fern Clemmer*

Internal Auditor

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking an internal auditor to conduct, coordinate, and design internal audits and compliance reviews and to maintain the business continuity plan. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree in business, accounting, or related field; possess or have the ability to obtain credentials for conducting trust audits. Knowledge of financial services and insurance products and/or CPA preferred.

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"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

CALENDAR

Mennonite Graduate Student Conference, June 10-12, **AMBS**, Elkhart, Ind. Papers from a variety of disciplines will be presented on the topic of "Exclusion." Come and meet fellow Mennonite Graduate students for a weekend of stimulating presentations and fellowship. Travel bursaries available. See http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/tmtc/gradconf.shtml for an application form and more information.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Clark, Bryce Jamison, April 1, to Nick and Jennifer Griffee Clark, Goshen, Ind.

Compagnari, Emily Jesse, March 17, to Jesse and Monica Ross Compagnari, Harrisonburg, Va.

Cooper, Iris Mariel, Dec. 20, 2005, to Daniel and Monica Cope Cooper, Coopersburg, Pa.

Gascho, Elliot John Hertzler, April 9, to Darrell Gascho and Julie Hertzler, Goshen, Ind.

Harrison, Jack, March 16, to Phil and Bonnie Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.

Hershberger, Tyler Alvin, Feb. 26, to Alvin and Emma Miller Hershberger, Dundee, Ohio.

Leatherman, Levi Benjamin, April 13, to Benjamin and Glenda Bergey Leatherman, Telford, Pa.

Lyndaker, Nathan Danehy, March 31, to Jeffrey and Debbie Danehy Lyndaker, Canton, N.Y.

Miller, Nora Jane, March 25, to Brian and Kari Yoder Miller, Keezletown, Va.

Ortman, William Jobe, March 19, to William and Sherilyn Graber Ortman, Marion, S.D.

Pankratz, Ella Irene, Feb. 19, to Greg and Julie Miller Pankratz, Inola, Okla.

Ramirez, Lance David, March 29, to Shawn and Tara Short Ramirez, Wauseon, Ohio.

Rupp, Elena Esther, March 28, to David and Beth Conrad Rupp, Pullman, Wa.

Weaver, Callie Joan, April 18, to Jeremy and Joan Steiner Weaver, Harrisonburg, Va.

Wenrich, Derrick Jonathan, March 29, to Jonathan and Anita Gruber Wenrich, Denver, Pa.

Wiens, Alex Allen, March 6, 2002, received for adoption Dec. 30, 2005, by Max and Louellen Pauls Wiens, Inman, Kan.

Wiens, Grant Eldon, March 3, 2005, received for adoption December 30, 2005, by Max and Louellen Pauls Wiens, Inman, Kan.

MARRIAGES

Eads/Flicker: Jill Eads, Elkhart, Ind., and Daryl Flicker, Elkhart, April 1 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Huggins/Mayer: Stacey Huggins, Kitchener, Ont., and Steven Mayer, St. Clements, Ont., April 8 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Kinsell/Van Roekel: Heidi Kinsell, Elbert, Colo., and Luke Van Roekel, Ft. Collins, Colo., March 11 at Monument (Colo.) Presbyterian Church.

Trotta/Yoder: Ryan Trotta, Burbank, Calif., and Sharon Yoder, Wellman, Iowa, March 18 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

DEATHS

Birky, Viola K., 85, Foosland, Ill., died April 2. Spouse: Wilbert Birky (deceased). Parents: Dan and Katie Zehr. Children: Roger, Dennis, Mervin, Don, Sandy Miller, Linda Ramirez, Tammy Keim; 23 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 5 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Croyle, Ellis B., 75, Goshen, Ind., died March 31. Spouse: Charlotte Hertzler Croyle. Parents: Lloyd S. and Emma Stahl Croyle. Children: Timothy, Thomas, Nancy Entz, Amy Deel; seven grandchildren. Funeral: April 6 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

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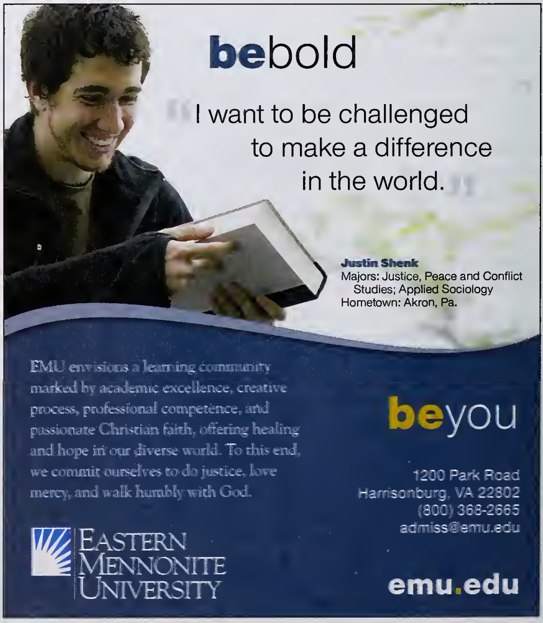

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Frederick, Mahlon M., 92, Souderton, Pa., died April 6. Spouse: Katie Derstine Frederick (deceased). Parents: Frank and Ida Moyer Frederick. Children: Glenn D., Harold D., Robert D., Rachel Leatherman; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 11 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Garber, John Ellsworth, 82, Hubbard, Ore., died April 4. Spouse: Vera Lais Garber. Parents: Lewis and Olive Miller Garber. Children: Phyllis Early, Paul, John, Mary Garber-Saleh, David, Joy Yoder, Ruth Claassen, Richard; 26 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 9 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard.

Gaskill, Welcome "Duke", 77, Nappanee, Ind., died March 26. Spouse: Verona "Skip" Gaskill. Parents: Lester and Mary Lehman Gaskill. Children: Cathy Mullet, Sara Hill, Clint, Eric (deceased); seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 31 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee.

Hershey, Lydia Kreider, 90, Lititz, Pa., died March 25. Spouse: Clarence Hershey (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Leah Hess Kreider. Children: John B., C. Ray; seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 29 at Landis Homes Chapel, Lititz.

Hostetler, Eugene Richard, 74, Harrisonburg, Va., died April 9. Spouse: Mary Naomi Mast Hostetler. Parents: Elmer and Edith Dodge Hostetler. Children: Rhoda Steiner, Cheri Garber, Christine Brenneman, Lorisa Willis, Lisa Friedenberg; 16 grandchildren. Funeral: April 12 at Ridgeway Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Landis, Sarah R., 75, Montgomeryville, Pa., died March 22. Parents: Warren and Clara Rickert Landis. Funeral: March 25 at Anders Detweiler Funeral Home, Souderton, Pa.

Mullet, Henry Laurence, 90, Sarasota, Fla., died Dec. 18, 2005. Spouse: Evelyn Mullet. Children: Mary I. Mast, Barbara S. Alderfer, Shirley A. Taber, Stan Adams; 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22, 2005, at Bayshore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Reeves, Leroy A., 84, Waka, Texas, died March 27. Spouse: Bonnie Reeves. Children: Keith, Doug, Harley, Carolena Cogdill; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 30 at Perryton (Texas) Mennonite Church.

Schlegel, Clara Immel, 89, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died April 7. Spouse: Earl C. Schlegel (deceased). Parents: William and Elva Stutzman Immel. Children: Gary, Randy, Jim, Janice Block, Sharon Thiess, LuAnne Pentecost; 10 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 10 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church.

Weaver, Jay R., 76, Goshen, Ind., died March 31. Spouse: Sharon E. Lapham Weaver. Parents: Osee and Mary Catherine Welty Weaver. Children: Ed, Ryan, Matt. Funeral: April 5 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

White, Sally Jo Roeschley, 68, Chevy Chase, Md., died April 6 of cancer. Spouse: Donald Emerson White. Parents: Eli and Emma Beller Roeschley. Children: Jane Hiebert-White, Miriam de Decker; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 29 at Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church.

Wiens, Richard H., 61, Hesston, Kan., died March 28. Spouse: Mary Lee Detweiler Wiens. Parents: Nick and Evelyn Wiens Wiebe. Children: Kim Wiens Barber, Phil Wiens; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 30 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Irene, 87, Arcola, Ill., died April 5. Spouse: Elvan Yoder (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Lydia Blucker. Children: Roger, Allen, Dale, Dorothy McQueen; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 8 at Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Remember the Future: The Pastoral Theology of Paul the Apostle by Jacob W. Elias (Herald Press, 2006, $15.99) highlights the ways Paul draws on narratives as he ministers via letters to congregations throughout the first-century Mediterranean world. Repeatedly Paul reminds his readers about Jesus' life and faithfulness, although he nowhere shares that story in any detail.

Priority Parenting: Reclaiming Your Home for Heaven's Sake by Steve Granger (Herald Press, 2006, $9.99) explores what constitutes a real home, the overcommitment in your schedule, the hurried lifestyle we are passing along to our kids, what God intends childhood to be and ideas for making your house a home that worships God.

Coming of Age: Exploring the Identity and Spirituality of Younger Men by David W. Anderson, Paul G. Hill and Roland D. Martinson (Fortress Press, 2006, $15.99) reflects on research identifying common themes based on interviews with 88 young men from different walks of life and suggests how to help young men see God at work in the world and in the church.

The Lost Sayings of Jesus: Teachings from Ancient Christian, Jewish, Gnostic and Islamic Sources—Annotated & Explained translated and annotated by Andrew Phillip Smith (SkyLight Paths, 2006, $16.99) depicts Jesus as a wisdom teacher who speaks as a mystic and spiritual master to people of all faiths.

Does God Forgive Me? by August Gold (SkyLight Paths, 2006, $8.99) helps young readers understand that no matter what we do or say, God's love and forgiveness comes with no strings attached.

Saving God's Green Earth: Rediscovering the Church's Responsibility to Environmental Stewardship by Tri Robinson with Jason Chatraw (Ampelon, 2006, $12.95) shows the biblical mandate for environmental stewardship—and how doing so will change the world around us.

Gracious Christianity: Living the Love We Profess by Douglas Jacobsen and Rodney J. Sawatsky (Baker Academic, 2006, $12.99) is a concise but relatively comprehensive overview of Christian beliefs showing how historic Christianity supports graciousness in faith and life.

The Sense of the Call: A Sabbath Way of Life for Those Who Serve God, the Church and the World by Marva J. Dawn (Eerdmans, 2006, $16) teaches skills such as learning to rest in prayer, saying no to busyness, enjoying one's body as God's temple and embracing the cost of living as a Christian disciple.

Separation and the Sword in Anabaptist Persuasion: Radical Confessional Rhetoric from Schleitheim to Dordrecht by Gerald Biesecker-Mast (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2006, $22.95) describes the relationship between separation and peace articulated by Anabaptists after the 1527 adoption of the Schleitheim *Brotherly Union*.

Using Scripture in a Global Age: Framing Biblical Issues by C. Norman Kraus (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2006, $19.95) addresses how the Bible may speak today, engaging Christology, hermeneutics, peace, sexuality, creationism, miracles, social justice and more.

MCC Resource Update (Spring 2006) lists new DVDs, videos, posters and brochures available from Mennonite Central Committee, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, www.mcc.org/catalog.

Woman Thou Art Loosed Special Edition (DVD, 110 minutes, $26.98) follows one woman's struggle to overcome the sins of a life filled with abuse and willful criminal acts. It is based on the book by Bishop T.D. Jakes and was nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards.

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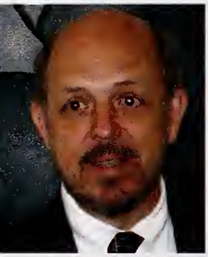

Michael A. King is pastor of Spring Mount (Pa.) Mennonite Church and owner of Cascadia Publishing House.

We were hours from home, my wife, Joan, and I. The phone rang. A panic-stricken voice said, "Oh Dad, I crashed my car." She was OK but stranded with hood buckled two feet up, front end smashed in, radiator's blood running green on the street. Coasting toward a red light, she had reached for a chocolate. Too late she had watched her car hood slam under a truck.

Her mother and I spent the frantic trip back home pondering the meaning of life and parenting and hope amid destruction. The next day, after visiting the crashed car, which Joan reported made her want to throw up, we went for groceries. A young mother had a baby in her shopping cart. The baby looked worshipfully up at the mother. The mom cooed at the baby. They looked so happy, so carefree, so innocent.

Joan and I burst out laughing. The poor mother gazed uneasily at our post-crash faces, haggard yet strangely giddy.

So we explained: "We're sorry you caught us laughing," we said. "You must think we're crazy. We were laughing because we remember having babies. And we remember older parents telling us, 'Enjoy these days while you have them.' Then last night our daughter crashed her car, and we were just thinking again of when she was just a happy baby like yours."

The young mom smiled tentatively but with a hint of fear woven in. I guessed she wasn't scared of us. Rather, she seemed to be peeking briefly at a fearsome future of babies who grow up to crash cars.

No doubt she realized that soon enough this brief world of life with baby would be gone. But if she was like us back then, she didn't fully believe in what was to come. I doubt any of us entirely believe that what we see ahead in other lives will also befall us. This can be good. Joan and I often wonder if we'd have plunged into the holy insanity of parenting if we could have seen where it would take us.

I doubt any of us entirely believe that what we see ahead in other lives will also befall us. This can be good.

But I did dare to consider that we had lived much of the path that young mother was just setting foot on; we could see things that were for her largely shrouded in fog. Then I thought forward to my parents and their peers decades ahead of me on the way. Surely they, too, see clearly so much that for me, as I skirt their land of old age but am not yet its citizen, remains wrapped in mist.

And that made me hope that I am not quite yet so old (at 51) to be heard as only self-serving when I say that it saddens me to see how quickly in our culture we turn from those with the eyes to see the entire journey. In my publishing work, for instance, I see how often the voices of those past retirement age are silenced or denigrated—and how much they have yet to say if given the platform.

This is not to suggest we should listen less to the youthful voices; I remember gratefully the editors who let my 20-something voice be heard back when I could say some things with a vigor and clarity these later years of grappling with life's challenges and complexities have sometimes muddied. And I want my daughters and their generations likewise to be able to share the insights their life stages and experiences—including car crashes—teach them.

But it is to dream of again treating parents and grandparents and all our elders as in biblical times: as those who tell us what to watch for on the roads they—but not yet we—have traveled and who bless and cheer us on the way.

A grandparent sent my daughter a contribution to her car reconstruction fund. My daughter was so moved. Her pain had been honored. Her grandparent had been this way before and was cheering her past the literal and symbolic wreckage of her life from the wise and generous perspective of one who could see the entire trip. TM

Mennonite
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Mennonite Voluntary Service worker Fjaere Harder, program coordinator of North Baltimore Mennonite Church's Asylum Seekers Housing Network, with the child of an asylum seeker.

This MVS worker nurtures global connections without leaving home

Through Asylum Seekers Housing Network, a program of North Baltimore Mennonite Church (NBMC), Fjaere Harder has discovered a profound connection. With refugees who come to the United States fleeing persecution, and with other Mennonite Church USA members serving in their own communities and internationally.

Harder works at Reservoir Hill House of Peace, the old mansion NBMC turned into a transitional home for refugees and asylum seekers from Cameroon, Afghanistan, the Congo and other countries. As Harder helps people facing major upheaval in their lives, she models not only what it means to be a Mennonite – but also what it means to be a Christian and an American. And as she addresses the needs of refugees from around the world, Harder recognizes the need for all parts of Mennonite Church USA to think beyond ourselves and reach out in mission and service to others in need – wherever we are.

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Everett J. Thomas

Identity crisis

Mennonites in North America may be heading toward an identity crisis. That's because what has traditionally made us distinct from other Christians no longer sets us apart. Furthermore, some church scholars and historians are telling us that we cannot call ourselves Anabaptists.

"We are affluent and conformed to this world," says Walter Klaassen (page 8), "... and therefore don't have the singleness of heart that was required [of 16th-century Anabaptists] for living faithfully in the face of imprisonment, torture, exile and death."

Klaassen does allow, however, that there may be real Anabaptists elsewhere in the world today, but they would be in places like Vietnam, Colombia and Ethiopia. If his judgment is correct, then those of us in North America may claim the name Mennonite but not Anabaptist.

But in our culture, even being Mennonite carries less and less distinction. In addition to our weakening convictions about pacifism (see April 18 editorial), we now must make room for high-profile Evangelicals in the United States who are getting headlines about justice issues and international service. For example, the February issue of *Christianity Today*—the magazine founded by Billy Graham in 1956—could easily serve as Sunday school content in any Mennonite congregation.

Some of the distinctives that shape Mennonite identity in North America are not so distinguishing anymore.

One editorial describes how Rick Warren and Bill Hybels have become involved in the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa—through their wives. The editorial ends with a call for the world's 2 billion Christians to become "one faithful force against one disease" in the same way Rotary International has been eradicating polio.

Other articles also fit. "Making Do With More" addresses our dangerous wealth and asks, "In an age of abundance, how do we survive with our souls intact?" Another article lists the "habits of highly effective justice workers." The cover story focuses on Christian ethics and "Why Torture Is Always Wrong."

It is wonderful to see the Evangelical community addressing these issues. But it also means that some of the distinctives that shape Mennonite identity within North America Christianity are not so distinguishing anymore. Add that to scholars telling us we are not really Anabaptist, and what's left? Borscht, shoo-fly pie and a cappella singing?

The answer is complicated. Those of us in North America are not the only ones who get to decide how we shall be identified. In fact, one of the most significant developments in the global Mennonite and Anabaptist family recently emerged around the matter of identity.

At the March gathering in California, Mennonite World Conference leaders took a historic action: They adopted a statement of core convictions. The statement includes basic beliefs held by most Christians as well as beliefs we emphasize more than do other Christians—such as nonviolence.

This is new: For the first time in our global history we have a document that articulates what we all believe. This "shared convictions" document will significantly shape our identity as a global church over the next decade.

Although the global statement is not intended to replace continental confessions of faith, the very act of accepting the statement could shape a new identity for us in North America. If we take seriously the discernment of sisters and brothers around the world, then our cultural drift and assimilation to North American values may be checked. However, it will be difficult because we are not accustomed to submitting to those without our Eurocentric history (see page 10). But such submitting is also something we believe in; this too will shape our identity.

As we are inspired by examples of genuine Anabaptism elsewhere around the world, we will be challenged to express that same radical faith in our culture. And when we exercise such faith in North American settings, we strengthen our identity as Anabaptist Mennonite Christians.—*ejt*

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The Mennonite

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May 16, 2006

making peace

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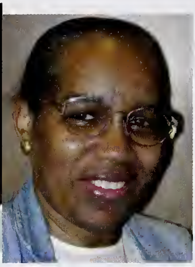
To a God who sees, knows and cares



Elaine Bryant is missional minister at Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

The following words came to mind in response to a prayer for a song that supports the belief that God sees, knows and cares.

"Be not dismayed what e'er betides.
God will take care of you;
Beneath his wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.
God will take care of you.
Through every day
O'er all the way;
He will take care of you
God will take care,
He'll take care of you."

The phrase that speaks of abiding beneath God's wings draws from imagery in Psalm 91:4.

The song above and the Psalmist's words serve, along with an old cane, a new instructor, new pastor, new living quarters, an early morning telephone call and three other Scriptures, to help me thank the God who sees, knows and cares. Sometimes we need more help than usual.

By God's grace the cane served as one of the first tangible reminders that God sees, knows and cares. It was given to me two years ago as a memento from the life of a beloved cousin. At the time it seemed odd that it was given to me. However, as my husband and I packed for a move from our house to an apartment, that cane, which had been put aside, proved to be just the thing to relieve the weight-bearing pain my doctor and I associated with a pulled muscle in my leg.

"Thank you, Father. You saw way up the road and knew two years ago that I would need this," I said, while I continued with my hurried packing.

It took Holy Spirit given Scriptures and understanding, however, to fully appreciate and connect the dots to conclude that God sees, knows and cares. These also helped me feel right about sharing in this way.

Since Jan. 24, my life has changed dramatically. Teaching a class that was like a loved ministry ceased for me. Being able to attend worship at Englewood, which has many sets of stairs, became too painful physically for me. By the grace of the God who sees, knows and cares, the new pastor was already in place to lead in worship and handle pastoral duties. Instead of a cane, a wheelchair became my primary means for pain-free mobility. Using a wheelchair would have been difficult in the home where we lived for 34 years. My husband and I have traveled to emergency room and scheduled health-plan visits to manage pain and for tests to confirm or rule out sciatica, osteoporosis and/or multiple myeloma. One doctor finally named multiple myeloma as a possibility. Knowing that kept me from another test later that day that the technician and her supervisor said may have been harmful in light otherwise. I thanked God, who sees, knows and cares.

Finally, and most importantly, to the helpful Scriptures. As I checked email on April 17, Hagar's naming of God in Genesis 16:13 (NKJV) came to mind: "She called the name of the Lord, who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees." The words of the Lord Jesus, which speak of the Father knowing "the things you have need of before you ask him" (Matthew 6:8) came to mind, along with 1 Peter 5:7, which instructs us to cast all our "care upon him, for he cares for" us.

I pray and expect these Scriptures, the tangible evidences noted and the prayers, encouraging words and loving support from my husband, family, friends and believers will help me respond as my dear sister in Christ Susan Sommer does. She daily offers praise and thanksgiving to God, who sees, knows and cares for each new day. I also pray this sharing helps others facing life-changing challenges do the same and to pray for me. TM

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 10, May 16, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Cover courtesy of Steve Thomas

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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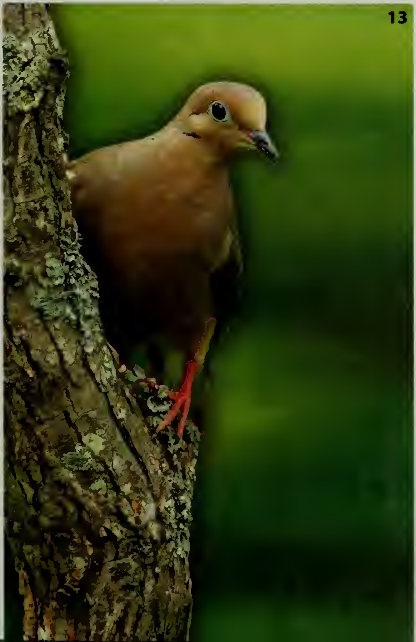

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Conflicted about peace

Thank you for the April 18 editorial ("Conflicted About Peace") clarifying the varied Mennonite positions on war and peace. To hear that some Mennonites defend the invasion of Iraq is distressing. Romans 13 might legitimately be used to justify a police force accompanied by a judicial system, but it is a stretch to use it as a God-given right for one nation to invade another. I am grateful that Christian Peacemaker Teams is "getting in the way" of the warmakers. Lots of Mennonites (and Christians from other traditions) are concluding that war is not the answer—for Christians or anyone else—solving conflicts. I can't believe that Jesus told us to love our enemies only because we have Christian or non-Christian neighbors to do the killing for us.—*Abraham K. Gehman, Bally, Pa.*

In the "Conflicted About Peace" editorial, Everett Thomas takes on a difficult subject: What stance on peace should modern Mennonites have? He accurately sums up the modern disconnect with traditional Mennonite pacifist views.

The call to begin to debate this issue is an important one. But there is one thing that we cannot forget in our dialogue—this is not a debate based on modern rules of democracy with the side most popular with today's ideas getting the most votes and therefore winning. I would even make the heretical statement that it doesn't come down to what any one church—even the Mennonite church—teaches. Different Christian church traditions teach conflicting views on the necessity of nonviolence. So if our foundation is on Jesus, then what it does come down to is what did Jesus teach about how to treat our enemies?

Mohammed taught that the ultimate aim of Islam is to marry government and religion to produce an Islamic state, and the sword should be used against "infidels." I don't think it would take much of a reading of the Gospels to find that Jesus taught and lived something radically different. Whose teaching do we believe in?

We'd better look closely at what Jesus really teaches in Scripture before we begin this debate. We will find things in there that both "conservative" and "liberal" believers may be challenged by but surprisingly able to agree on.—*Kenton Glick, Lititz, Pa.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Our cover may jar you, with its juxtaposition of martial arts and the words "making peace." But take a look at the story on page 16 about Wes Higginbotham, a member of Walnut Hill Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., and Steve Thomas, the congregation's pastor, and their work with youth. Perhaps we Mennonites have made peacemaking too passive a concept and failed to see the strength and discipline it requires. This issue also focuses on church. Ryan Ahlgrim (page 8) notes that conversion requires a community of faith, while Myron Augsburger (page 10) calls on congregations to be communities of peace. This will require more cooperation, particularly in the polarized milieu of U.S. religion. Ann Graham Price (page 14) reports on the work of the Military Counseling Network with soldiers seeking conscientious objector status. Editor Everett J. Thomas calls us to address the crisis in Darfur by writing our representatives.—*Associate editor*

I am grateful that Everett Thomas tackled the question What does it mean for us Mennonites to be a peace church in a time of war? in his April 18 editorial. But I was disappointed in how he portrayed the traditional Mennonite stance that rejects personal involvement in war but is sometimes silent about the state's decision to go to war. This position is not based on being grateful that we are "fortunate enough to live in a land that provides us with security and prosperity." Rather this position is based on the recognition that it is impossible for the state to be nonviolent.

The church and the state operate from two different power bases (or, to use traditional language, two different kingdoms) and have different purposes. The earliest Anabaptists affirmed that the use of violent force by the state is allowed by God to maintain civil order but is "outside the perfection of Christ" and so is not to be used by Christians.

So what are the implications of this position when it comes to our nation being at war? Mennonites who take the traditional position will affirm that war is a horrible act that goes against the way of Christ and that we must not participate in it. These same Mennonites recognize the sad reality that states sometimes need to use violence to defend their citizens and maintain civil order and so do not criticize the state for doing this. However, if the state is using violence when it does not need to, or going to war without sufficient justification, traditional Mennonites can rightly criticize the government for doing so.—*Ryan Ahlgrim, Indianapolis*

New look at parable

Many thanks to Jane Yoder-Short for her insightful "The Parable of the Traveling CEO" (April 18). At last an interpretation that makes sense! If the master is the god-figure, his behavior and attitude seems out of sync with the God revealed in Jesus. I always felt sorry for the poor fellow with the one talent, especially when he was judged so harshly. I never could picture God endorsing the idea that "to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away" (Matthew 25:29). It seems to be describing unbridled greed—the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Hardly the upside-down reign of God where justice and mercy are the norm. How refreshing to realize that the supposed villain is actually the hero.—*Verna Zook, Iowa City, Iowa*

The offering is central to worship

Karl McKinney's article on racism (Grace and Truth, April 18) was insightful, provocative and challenging—as his writing typically is. However, I was taken aback by his comment that "the offering is not a part of the [Mennonite] order of worship." Unless I have been completely misguided, my impression is that [stewardship teachers] Lynn Miller and Mark Vincent have spent the past decade trying to help us understand and believe that the offering is central to the order of worship. My sense is that many of our churches have subscribed to that point of view and have organized their worship experiences accordingly. My hope is that many more will experience that blessing.—*William R. Zuercher, Hesston, Kan.*

When does church year begin?

For most of us, the Christian year centers around two seasons: Advent and Lent. Next comes Pentecost. The rest is considered "Ordinary Time." It is unclear when the liturgical year begins. Should it not begin with the beginning?

As has been well said, Creation is "God's first word." Salvation, the final word. This being so, why is there no Creation festival in our churches? The closest we come is Thanksgiving. But why not begin the Christian year in fall, say in October, with a festival celebrating Creation? Advent and Lenten rituals can deepen our faith. Material to help celebrate Creation and the great Creator could do the same. Non-Christians could be invited to participate, too, and this might be another way of intentionally trying to be more missional about our faith.—*Fritz Sprunger, Orrville, Ohio*

Editor's note: Christians who observe the church year begin with the first Sunday of Advent.

Still reading

At age 89, I still read *The Mennonite* from cover to cover. I almost feel it would be a sin to not order it. I grew up with the *Gospel Herald* in Mama's hand. Some mornings she would wake up tired and apologize to the family that she had to read the paper before going to bed the evening before. The paper was always in our home, even though my parents weren't wealthy and perhaps couldn't really afford it. Getting *The Mennonite* is almost not affordable for me, but I have to have it. Even though I don't agree with all of the content of the paper, I want to thank you for printing a magazine that is good to read.—*Anna Marie Steckley, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Refuses to pay

I object on religious grounds to the payment of that portion of my federal income taxes that supports war making and militarism—49 percent of the U.S. budget in the current fiscal year according to the War Resisters League (www.war-resisters.org/piechart.htm). I do not want my federal tax dollars to be used to underwrite an out-of-control military machine that is destroying God's creation at the same time that legitimate human needs are not met. To express my conscientious objection to war, I am withholding from my current federal income tax payment an amount equal to one dime for every billion dollars in the 2005 U.S. military budget. I am donating that amount—$78.30—to the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund to be used in the pursuit of peace.—*H.A. Penner, Akron. Pa.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Should *The Mennonite* run personal ads to help singles find each other? (77 votes)

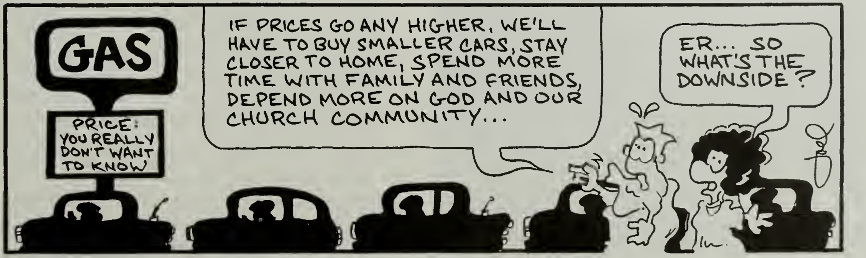
○ Yes (32%)

○ No (53%)

○ Not sure (14%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


GAS
PRICE: YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO KNOW
IF PRICES GO ANY HIGHER, WE'LL HAVE TO BUY SMALLER CARS, STAY CLOSER TO HOME, SPEND MORE TIME WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, DEPEND MORE ON GOD AND OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY...
ER... SO WHAT'S THE DOWNSIDE?

IN BRIEF

$417 for one sheet of toilet paper

How bad is inflation in Zimbabwe, home to many Brethren in Christ? Consider this: At a supermarket near the center of Harare, toilet paper costs $417. No, not per roll. That is the value of a single two-ply sheet. A roll costs $145,750—in American currency, about 69 cents. For untold numbers of Zimbabweans, toilet paper—and bread, margarine, meat, even the once ubiquitous morning cup of tea—have become unimaginable luxuries. All are casualties of the hyperinflation that is roaring toward 1,000 percent a year, a rate usually seen only in war zones. The purity of Harare's drinking water, siphoned from a lake downstream of its sewer outfall, has been unreliable for months, and dysentery and cholera swept the city last December and January. The city suffers rolling electrical blackouts. Mounds of uncollected garbage pile up on the streets of the slums.—*New York Times*

Tauferjahr 2007

In 2007, a commemorative year (called "Tauferjahr," or "baptism year") will be held in Emmental, Switzerland, on the subject of baptism. An international event will be held July 26-29, 2007. For more information, go to www.emmental.ch/taueferjahr07.

The Mennonite wins four ACP awards

ORLANDO, Fla.—*The Mennonite* won four awards at the 2006 annual convention of the Associated Church Press (ACP), held here April 23-26.

The Mennonite Church USA magazine received an Award of Merit (second place) for convention coverage (July 26, 2005, issue) and honorable mention (third place) for poetry (Oct. 18, "Prodigal" by Todd Davis), photography by Everett Thomas (Dec. 20, left) and ancillary product (Series 1.1). *The Mennonite* has won a poetry award five straight years.

Where should we put the baby?

Other Mennonite papers, *A Common Place* and *Mennonite Weekly Review*, also won awards.

ACP is a 90-year-old professional association of 124 religious publications representing a combined circulation of well over 20 million.—*ACP*

MCC continues to provide aid in Darfur

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is continuing to provide food and blankets to people displaced by a violent conflict in western Sudan's Darfur region as part of an aid response that has totaled more than $5.5 million over the last two years.

Violence spiraled out of control in Darfur after a rebellion began three years ago. (See Editorial, page 32.) Government forces and government-backed militias responded with a scorched-earth campaign that has led to several hundred thousand deaths and the displacement of more than 2 million people, according to most estimates.

Jeremy Hess

Worth a thousand words

Believers worship in Palanchai, Thailand. Photographer Jeremy Hess, a member of Habecker Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., traveled to Thailand and Cambodia Feb. 16-March 6 to photograph churches connected with Eastern Mennonite Missions.—*EMM*

MCC has coordinated the shipment of 3,000 metric tons of yellow split peas and 3,000 metric tons of wheat to displacement camps in Darfur since 2004. Of this food, which was provided by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, about 1,200 metric tons of wheat remain to be distributed.

MCC has collected 81,755 blankets for displaced people in Darfur from constituents in Canada and the United States. Of these blankets, about 26,000 remain to be distributed in Darfur.

MCC financially supported the Sudan Council of Churches in distributing blankets and constructing eight schools and 500 shelters for families in displacement camps. MCC also provided relief supplies and milk powder to camps for Darfur refugees in Chad.

MCC is considering another shipment of food to Darfur and to Sudan's southern regions, where the need for humanitarian assistance is also great due to a decades-long civil war that ended last year.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

MWC youth committee sets $100,000 goal

PASADENA, Calif.—The Mennonite World Conference's global youth committee, AMIGOS, concluded its meetings here with a commitment to raise $100,000 to help Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and Anabaptist-related young people from around the world attend the Global Youth Summit in 2009. The GYS will be held in conjunction with the next MWC world assembly in Paraguay.

The first GYS was held in Zimbabwe in 2003 along with the MWC world assembly. MWC raised enough money to hold the event and subsidize 15 delegates from Africa, Asia and Latin America. About seven qualified delegates from Latin America could not attend GYS due to insufficient funds for their travel. One delegate raised his own funds to come to Zimbabwe.

AMIGOS expects the $100,000 fund to partially subsidize about 50 delegates and cover AMIGOS' operational expenses between 2006 and 2009. —*Mennonite World Conference*

Ground-blessing for AMBS' new library

ELKHART, Ind.—Using the same shovel he used to break ground on the campus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart 49 years ago, Erland Waltner, president emeritus, planted a forsythia bush during the ground-bless-

David Fisher Fast

e doctor is in … Thailand

lores Logan examines a Buddhist monk during a medical
nic at Living Water Church in Borabu, Thailand. The monk,
uncle of a church member, was one of more than 425 peo-
to receive medical attention. Organizers also offered a
spel presentation and showed the *Jesus* film. Logan, a doc-
from Regina, Sask., is part of a family of Canadian Menno-
es who wanted to learn about mission. The Logans, mem-
rs of Grace Mennonite Church, were friends of Pat and Rad
umphan, who needed a physician for the clinics held in 10
lages surrounding Borabu the two weeks before Easter.
gan checked eyes, ears and vital signs while answering
estions and testing for diabetes and other conditions.
Mennonite Mission Network

ing service April 21 for the seminary's new library and campus center.

The new facility will have space not only for the long-awaited main-floor library but also will house the bookstore and a foyer for display of art. When the current library facilities are vacated and renovated, they will become space for a larger student lounge and offices for the AMBS Church Leadership Center and campus pastor.

The facility is registered with the United States Green Building Council with the goal of achieving gold-level certification using LEED criteria (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). It is the first theological library to be registered.—*AMBS*

Two Hesston grads to explore church ministry

HESSTON, Kan.—Two Hesston College sophomores who graduated May 7, plan to participate in the Ministry Inquiry Program this summer.

Brian Hackman, Emmaus, Pa., will serve at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston; while Gemma Patton, Albany, Ore., will serve at Salem (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

The Ministry Inquiry Program, administered by Mennonite Church USA, gives students an opportunity to see if the ministry is for them. Campus pastor Kevin Wilder says both assignments will be more inquiry-focused than ministry-focused. "They don't know that they want to be in ministry, but they want to check it out," he says. "Even if they don't become pastors, they'll be great lay people in the church."—*Hesston College*

The most dangerous thing: doing nothing

GOSHEN, Ind.—Dr. Dan Nafziger of Goshen, MMA's medical director, was one of 11 health-care workers from North America who joined a medical "Serve and Learn" tour organized by Mennonite Central Committee in early March.

In Jos, Nigeria, and the surrounding area, the U.S. and Canadian team worked with local professionals in a variety of medical hospitals and clinics, including Faith Alive, a free clinic that primarily serves HIV patients.

Since Nafziger returned to the United States, the clinic was destroyed. On April 13, the clinic burned to the ground due to an electrical problem. They lost their facility, most of their equipment and a significant portion of their drug supplies.

Already medical professionals in Nigeria do without consistent running water and electricity or adequate lab facilities—all which Nafziger, an infectious disease specialist, admits he assumed they would have more available.

Through its investments, MMA is involved as a shareholder in working with multinational corporations to address the social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS. "The most dangerous thing for us here … is doing nothing," says Nafziger. —*MMA*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Ten Thousand Villages names new CEO

Ten Thousand Villages has appointed Craig Schloneger, Lititz, Pa., Chief Executive Officer, effective April 25. He replaces Paul Myers, who plans to retire in June. Schloneger, most recently lead pastor at Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., was president of Dutch Corporation in Walnut Creek, Ohio. He also served a three-year term as an educator and country representative for Mennonite Central Committee in Swaziland in the early 1990s.—*Ten Thousand Villages*

Beun named Central Christian School leader

Central Christian School, Kidron, Ohio, on April 21 named Henry Beun the next school leader. Beun has been the high school's Bible teacher since 1984. He has also served as coach for volleyball and men's basketball and dean of students. He replaces Peter Wiebe, who served as interim superintendent since last July.—*Central Christian School*

Dustin Combs

Follow your mother

After hatching on the Goshen (Ind.) College campus, 13 ducklings follow their mother to the Elkhart River as they cross Main Street in Goshen.—*Goshen College*

Converted by the church

by Ryan Ahlgrim

To be truly converted, for transformation to be ongoing, we must be nurtured by a community of faith.

I remember my feeling of embarrassment more than 30 years ago when someone asked me, "How many people have you converted?" I was part of the Jesus Movement of the 1970s—enthusiastic and evangelistic, handing out Christian literature and readily witnessing to others about my faith. But how many people had I convinced to make a commitment to Christ? The truthful answer was none.

The question lingers to this day because, as far as I know, the answer is still none. Despite being a youth pastor, an assistant pastor, a church planter and a lead pastor for almost 25 years; despite having preached well over 1,000 sermons; despite countless heartfelt discussions with people in spiritual crisis; and despite having baptized scores of youth and adults over the years, no one has become a Christian specifically because of me. But that does not embarrass me anymore, because I now realize that conversion rarely occurs through an individual's witness. We are converted by the church.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, the original disciples of Jesus were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and began praising God in a variety of languages. A crowd gathered and asked, "What does this mean?" Peter answered with a powerful sermon in which he essentially said, "It means that what the prophet Joel predicted has come true—God is pouring out God's Spirit in an unlimited way. Anyone who repents and is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ will be forgiven and receive the gift of God's Spirit." The response to this message was overwhelming: 3,000 were baptized that day.

It is together that we enable others not only to hear about faith but to see faith and experience faith in its many rich textures.

I have always been envious of Peter. With one sermon he led thousands to turn their lives over to God. But what if Peter had then simply sent them all home—what would have happened? I suspect, in the long run, nothing would have happened. Today there probably would be no church and no Christian faith. To be truly converted, for transformation to be ongoing and make a real difference, we must be nurtured by a community of faith. It was not Peter or his single sermon that converted 3,000 people, it was what happened next: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (2:42).

I love to preach, and I often strive to preach sermons that will convert and transform my listeners through an encounter with the Word of God. One can find any number of books (including one written by me) espousing this approach to preaching. But perhaps this view of preaching is too grandiose and misunderstands how conversion actually happens.

Preaching can do many things, but by itself it rarely transforms the core of a person's life. Preaching can teach information about the Bible and the Christian faith; it can illuminate current issues; it can draw a picture for listeners to imaginatively enter into; it can inspire an encounter with the Word of God; it can persuade us to change our minds; it can entice us to come back for more; it may even provoke a trip down the aisle during an altar call; but I think this should not be confused with a fully authentic conversion.

Conversion to life in Christ requires continuous supportive input from many sources—preaching, study, spiritual disciplines, worship and interaction with others on a similar journey. And it requires practice. The church provides these conditions. The congregation comes together regularly to celebrate and practice its faith, and the result is often a conversion for those who participate. We are transformed by all those Sunday school lessons, by the fellowship at the carry-in meals, by the weekly hymns and praise music, by the rituals pointing us toward a deeper reality and by the daily discipleship of the other church members. An accumulation of embodied examples, holy habits and personal experiences transform us far more than the words or actions of one individual.

When we share our faith with others, it is highly unlikely that we, by ourselves, will bring lasting healing to another. Each of us is only one person, which means we are only one tiny sliver of the good news. To be transformed, a person needs to see not each of us alone but us together. It is together that we are the body of Christ in this world. It is together that we enable others not only to hear about faith but to see faith and experience faith in its many rich textures.

One Sunday morning a young woman stood up to confess her faith and join the church. She had been sexually molested as a child for many years, which had resulted in her becoming promiscuous in a desperate attempt to find love as a teenager and young adult. Repeatedly used and abused by others, she attempted suicide three times. After the third attempt, she began attending a church where she was truly welcomed. It wasn't a sermon that converted her or the ministry of a pastor; it was the congregation—accepting her, sharing faith and slowly healing her wounds. As she stood before the congregation, tears streamed down her cheeks as she remembered the past, but a big smile beamed from her face as she looked into the future.

I am not bothered that I have converted no one because I know I am a part of a church that is converting many.

Ryan Ahlgrim is pastor of First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Mennonite Mission Network

The body of Christ: Paraguayan Mennonite Hans Penner takes a piece of gravel from David Neufeld as a commitment to be "the church in the street" at La Roca´s building dedication and fourth anniversary celebration this year.

Conversion to life in Christ requires continuous supportive input from many sources.

Congregations as communities of peace

by Myron S. Augsburger

A call for American Christians to work together in following the lordship of Jesus Christ

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.—Romans 14:17

Our reconciling Lord calls us from estrangement into fellowship, from unbelief to belief, from self-centeredness to God-centeredness, from exclusion to inclusion, from hostility to the openness of love. We are "resident aliens" in the world, followers of the one who said: "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36).

In late November 2005, Esther, my wife, and I each had the privilege of teaching several weeks at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Croatia. The administration had asked me to teach a course on justice and peace. In that context the relevance of this topic was readily apparent, but the interpretation of this biblical teaching confronted me with the challenge of contextualization. After two weeks of sharing, my focus was not on social or political action but on the church itself, on the dynamic of presence when congregations commit themselves to be communities of peace in society. The outstanding book *Exclusion and Embrace* by our Croatian brother Miroslav Volf, now professor at Yale University, was a welcome text to engage the minds of the young people from the Baltic and beyond.

Upon our return home, the concern remained with me; how to help congregations of Christians become communities of peace. Here we in the American church are subject, without being fully aware, to a subsurface Constantinianism that shapes much of our thinking. We tend to pursue a civil religion without considering our loyalty to the sovereignty of God. The church has too often let society squeeze us into its mold, and we become a reflection of the thinking and behavior of our society in its commercialism, greed, sensuality, individualism, its quest for power and dominance and other expressions. Many American Christians tend to baptize our way of life by reference to the cross, as did Constantine, but fail to take up the cross and follow the Master.

The church has too often let society squeeze us into its mold, and we become a reflection of the thinking and behavior of our society in its commercialism, greed, sensuality, individualism, its quest for power and dominance and other expressions.

TCHENER CITY HALL

The whole Jesus: Jim Hett addresses the press at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church's sixth Palm Sunday Peace Pilgrimage.

The church seems to have selected from Jesus those things we feel meet our needs but has failed to accept the whole Jesus. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," expresses the truth of God and the pattern of walking with God, yet there are aspects of Jesus' expression many of us ignore. Paul wrote, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). This confession is an identity with the whole Jesus, not an attempt to use Jesus in some partial way. He is our Savior and our Lord. His lordship means that we accept him for who he is, and this includes what he said and did and was as the Incarnate Lord.

Such acceptance means, as John wrote in his first Epistle, we should live as he lived, walk as he walked and love as he loved. Such acceptance responds to Jesus' words: "Whoever keeps my word will never see death" (John 8:51). His sayings call us to live in faithfulness to our Lord, to enter covenant with him and be true to our commitment in covenant.

The church needs to help the world recognize that violence only begets violence.

On congregations being communities of peace, Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35). This love is not just to be extended to those who are "loveable" but, as Jesus said: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also. … Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:27-31). Paul picks up this theme and admonishes, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). This is the opposite of retaliation; it is a refusal to seek revenge. Jesus came not as a Prince of Power but as the Prince of Peace.

The church needs to help the world recognize

Continued on page 12

The church is not an arm of government but a servant in society to express the grace of Christ to live in love, equity, peace, justice and mutuality.

Continued from page 11

that violence only begets violence. There must be another way for people of grace to seek by conversations of love to change relational problems. Turning the other cheek suggests this; it means one is free to treat another person by one's own principles and not simply let their treatment of us determine our treatment of them.

But how do we as disciples work this out in social and international relations? We in the Western world, with our plenty, need to treat the poor, suffering and starving peoples who have so little with love and participation in their plight. We need to discover the place of both words of grace and participation in grace by equity and mutuality. We have seen remarkable expressions of this compassion by people both Christian and secular who, with the privilege of riches, have gone to regions of Africa and shared extensively with those in need. Such sharing may tell us not all Americans are committed to dominance and power. By sharing we help overcome the patterns of violence that arise when people in need think they have no other recourse than to take from others.

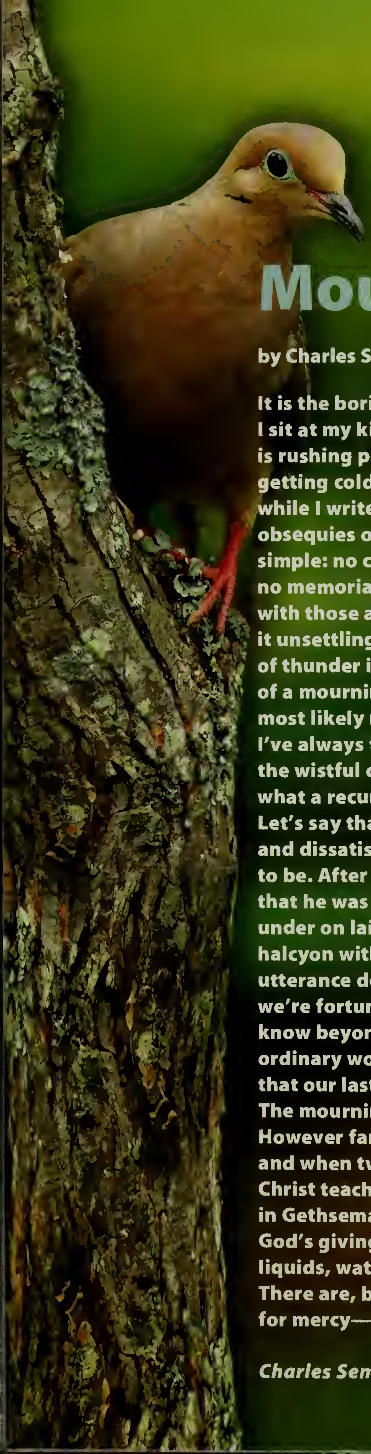
It is time for people with different views on peace and rejection of violence to talk with each other. While I am committed to follow Jesus' teachings on nonviolence and am a pacifist, many Christians take "just war" as their claim to process a stance toward the violence of war. Many are reexamining this position. For example, Glen Stassen of Fuller Theological Seminary and Jim Wallis of *Sojourners* ask how to work for peace. Most who claim the just-war position fail to take the next important step in a critique of all war, daring to speak by their own criteria as to whether a war is just or not. It seems clear that war is not just, and both positions should be true to their claims of covenant faith. Both pacifists and just-war proponents can speak to our society and call people to integrity with their claim.

One difficulty in conversation is that the "right wing" of evangelicalism has another stance. They even find it difficult to see in the National Association of Evangelicals' Commission on Peace those statements that would hold them accountable to other than a politicized response. They seem to find it easy to write off other sincere Christians who are committed to the way of peace and nonviolence as though we are a threat to them. The difference seems to indicate that their position is a "holy war" position. With a "flat book" view of the Bible they seem to relate Old Testament passages on war to today, as though God would pit his church against other peoples. One can scarcely distinguish this "holy war" position from Muslims who take a similar approach.

The church should not try to control the political orders but respect the role of government in its place. We have a unique role of being ambassadors for Christ. We are called to serve our Redeemer in ways that express and extend his redemptive mission to all peoples. This is our calling and one that engages congregations in being communities of peace. We respect a secular government as a good government if it looks out for the freedom of all people with diversity of beliefs in any given society, something we call democracy. But a secular church is a rotten church, for we are called to faithfulness to our One Lord. Secular governments show a greater measure of peace in society than governments that are dictatorial and seek to "freeze" one form of religion for all of its citizens. Even should a leader be a committed Christian, the New Testament context shows it is important for that leader to respect the variety in the secular orders and seek justice for all alike.

The church is not an arm of government but a servant in society to express the grace of Christ in his calling to live in love, equity, peace, justice and mutuality. Our challenge is to gain clarity on the mission of the church and be proactive in the mission of Christ in compassionate service to all peoples. As Mennonites, with our commitment to pacifism, our conversation should not be passive but find a way to meet people on their own ground, their just-war claims, and call various churches to be consistent in taking a stance against the injustice of war and violence. While we differ, there is much on which we can work together in the promotion of peace. Let us stop wasting our energy competing with or trying to manipulate government and instead be the church, the body of Christ, a presence for our Lord in society.

Myron S. Augsburger is interim pastor at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Praise Fellowship.



Mourning dove

by Charles Semones

It is the boring tag-end of an uneventful morning in late May.
I sit at my kitchen table while, outdoors, the headstrong spring
is rushing pell-mell toward the summer solstice. My coffee's
getting cold in the souvenir mug I bought at Walden Pond
while I write a directive—"To Whom It May Concern"—for my
obsequies or, rather, the lack of any. I'm keeping my last rites
simple: no costly, time-consuming folderol-cremation,
no memorial service, the burial of my ashes in our family plot
with those already there, some of whom I've missed. I do not find
it unsettling, but unexplainably soothing, that there are low snarls
of thunder in the west and every now and then the five faint notes
of a mourning dove sounding far-off, as distant as heaven, but
most likely no farther away than my next-door neighbor's woods.
I've always thought that of the myriad noises any day brings,
the wistful calling of the mourning dove must come closest to being
what a recurrent pleading from the other side would sound like.
Let's say that someone who's left the earth for good is homesick
and dissatisfied in spite of what the comfy never-ending is supposed
to be. After too much time not broken into days and nights
that he was used to here—no fields to plow in spring, no oak trees to nap
under on laid-back summer days, and no Indian summer afternoons
halcyon with gossamer—he'd likely find a way to send a soulful
utterance down through boundless altitudes so that we, provided
we're fortunate enough to hear it clearly as a Sabbath bell, would
know beyond a doubt that it was no ordinary voice and those no
ordinary words we were listening to, but all the proof we need
that our last breath-catch is not an end to anything, but a beginning.
The mourning dove makes five ghost-syllables into a plainsong.
However far away one may seem to be when dawn reruns creation,
and when twilight darkening to dusk bends the knee for evening prayer,
Christ teaches his apostles the beatitudes or prays, in extremis,
in Gethsemane again. I think of sacraments: baptism and Communion—
God's giving us his blessing to draw near him in the purest of all
liquids, water, and feed on the body and the blood made bread and wine.
There are, beyond an impenetrable distance, a supplicant's dire pleas
for mercy—a penitent's falling on his face for a last chance at grace.

Charles Semones lives in Harrodsburg, Ky.

together ■ sharing all of
Christ
with all of creation

PART 7 OF AN EIGHT-PART SERIES

Going through the gauntlet

by Ann Graham Price

For Vincent LaVolpa, the defining moment came at a tense checkpoint in Iraq as a car sped toward him. Instinctively taking aim at the car's occupants, LaVolpa stopped himself a split-second before firing. Instead he shot out the car's tires, bringing the vehicle to a halt.

Inside cowered a little girl and her frightened parents. LaVolpa was horrified. It's my job to kill people, he thought.

In that moment, somewhere at the core of Vincent LaVolpa—decorated Army hero, respected unit leader, quintessential soldier's soldier—something clicked.

"Vince came to the Military Counseling Network after he had been in Iraq for a year," says Michael Sharp, who works at the organization for soldiers seeking conscientious objector status. "He was confused. He didn't know if he was a CO or not, but he knew he wasn't going to do that again."

A partner of Mennonite Mission Network, the counseling network, based in Germany, was set up under the umbrella of the GI Rights Hotline, based in Washington.

For Michael, such an assignment seemed an obvious choice. He grew up in a Mennonite home, where peace theology ruled out any question of military service. Helping soldiers work their way through the complex CO application process offered a more positive witness than merely protesting war.

"[Soldiers] were always 'the other,' set up to be our exact opposite: They believe the opposite of what we believe," Michael says. "It's dehumanizing. When you meet them and spend time with them, you find out these guys are people, too. They have the same kind of questions and struggles we do."

Vincent's questions began long before the checkpoint incident in Iraq. They began while he was still stationed in Germany.

The recruiter had promised him money for college and a job as a combat engineer, which was explained as someone who builds bridges. Although Vincent had hoped to enter as a medic, this alternative didn't sound too bad.

"You can always change jobs if you don't like what you're doing," the recruiter assured him.

As it turned out, the main job of combat engineers is demolitions. It was strenuous work, and he discovered he had little time or energy left over at the end of the long work day for college coursework. Vincent tried to change to another job.

"That's when I found out you could only change to another job that the Army specified," he said.

In practice, it meant Vincent could only exchange his current high-risk demolitions assignment for one that was equally high-risk.

Then his unit was deployed to Iraq. That was where things crystallized.

He saw people in his unit get shot. He got shot. He asked himself some hard questions. Why had he signed up? If it was for the college money, then why was he supposed to be killing people? Was he responsible if someone else gave the orders?

He decided he had to take responsibility for doing what he was being asked to do.

"I was taking the easy way out. There are scholarships and financial-aid programs to help people put themselves through college," Vincent says. "You don't want to take someone's life because you chose a shortcut to college."

According to Bill Galvin, counseling coordinator at the Center on Conscience & War (part of the GI Rights Hotline), Vincent's experience is common.

"It's one thing to say, I want to serve my country, and even to know that means going to war," Galvin says. "It's quite another thing to be in this

You don't want to take someone's life because you chose a shortcut to college.
—Vincent LaVolpa

training where war is glorified and you're being taught that it's exciting to kill people.

"[Recruiters] play up the money for college, the excitement, the travel," he adds. "If your job specialty is computer skills, you're told you'll have a desk job. But you can be sent to the field. It's not illegal, but it's certainly wrong."

Michael says it's hard for civilians to understand the difficulty of the process these recruits face. "To question what they grew up learning is turning the world on its head," he says. "It's hard to understand how the military can be your whole world. You have to follow orders. To stand up and say you're not going to be a part of this anymore goes against that. They're completely dependent on something they're about to deny. The military can take away your livelihood and make your life totally miserable. They don't have a lot to gain by thinking all this stuff through."

It doesn't help that the Army chaplains assigned to make a recommendation based on interviewing them may be especially on the defensive.

"There's this sense of, 'Are you saying I'm not a Christian because I'm in the Army?'" Michael says.

Yet the chaplain is also a critical person in the process, according to Dick Davis, a former army chaplain who himself applied for and obtained CO status after the Gulf War. Davis now works with Mennonite Mission Network as minister for urban ministry.

"It requires a tremendous amount of work to interview someone properly," Davis says. "Some chaplains are extremely loyal to the system and will resist anyone applying for CO status. Sometimes they're belligerent and vindictive. They see that person as a threat and will do everything they can to stymie the process.

"On the other hand," Davis says, "I've known some chaplains who totally disagree [with CO applicants] but try to provide a genuine service and facilitate the process, giving a fair and objective determination. I've known both kinds."

When COs emerge from this kind of trial by fire, they are generally much stronger in their beliefs.

"Having gone through the gauntlet, they have no choice but to grow," Michael says. "It's adversity to the nth degree."

Clifton Hicks (see box) says the CO approval process is one of the most difficult things he has ever done yet also one of the most important.

Would he tell other soldiers having second thoughts about war to do the same?

"Yes, and take no other steps," he says without hesitation. "A CO discharge is the only honorable discharge the military has to offer, and it is the best thing you can do, not only for yourself but for the country and the military."

Ann Graham Price is a writer for Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart, Ind.

Better approval process a focus of advocacy work

To Clifton Hicks, the eight months it took to get his conscientious objector application approved made going to work nearly unbearable.

"I've got this big weight on my shoulders," he says. "Whose desk is it sitting on? Has it been lost? Thrown away? I was paranoid about people trying to sabotage the case. My life was hanging in the balance."

That's the kind of drawn-out torment the Center on Conscience and War based in Washington hopes to target, says counseling coordinator Bill Galvin. The center focuses on lobbying Congress for laws that will require the military to approve applications in a timely manner.

In addition to the counseling network, Mennonite Mission Network is involved in a variety of other peace-building initiatives, including

- The Peace and Justice Support Network;
- Anabaptist centers in major cities in Europe and Asia;
- Peace advocacy and reconciliation ministries in areas of conflict;
- Peace-building and conflict-resolution workshops and seminars.

For more information, go to either www:centeronconscience.org or to www.mennonitemission.net.—*Ann Graham Price*

Martial arts for making peace

by Everett J. Thomas

John Howard Yoder suggested that Mennonites might want to learn martial arts as a way of peacemaking … especially aikido. —Steve Thomas

When confronted by violence, is there some way to respond other than fight or flight? "That's the question that is often raised," says Steve Thomas, pastor at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., and first-degree black belt instructor in Tae Kwon Do.

Steve Thomas and Wes Higginbotham, a member at Walnut Hill with a third-degree black belt, helped a mission group from their congregation create a Peacemakers program. It has served 326 youth in Goshen. The program draws on the traditions of martial arts that espouse peace and nonviolence. Receiving support from 24 local businesses, Steve and Wes recently opened a 2,200-square-foot academy on Main Street.

"What should youth do when threatened?" they asked in a letter to supporters last November. "And what can bystanders do when they witness aggression?"

Steve and Wes teach self-discipline and physical responses that do not require someone to win and someone to lose.

"Rather than getting into a cowering stance," Steve says, "which invites … further aggression, and rather than raising your fists [and] accepting the challenge, we teach them to get in a safe stance; get out of harm's way but [have] hands ready to block a blow. Keeping a confident stance … can diffuse violence."

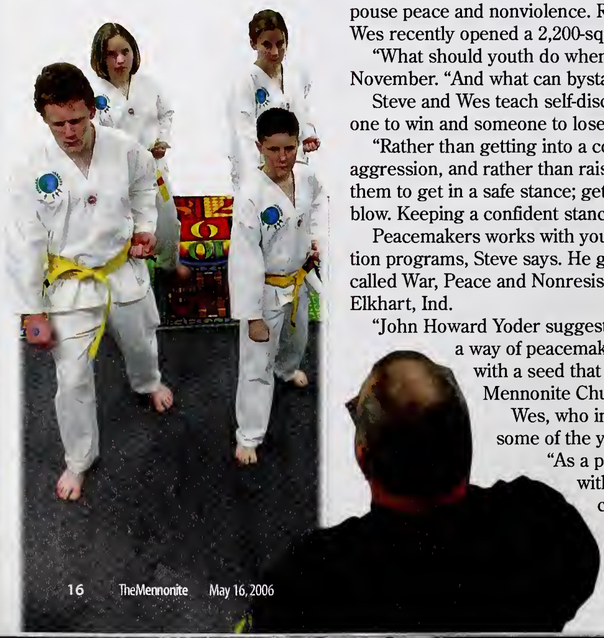
Peacemakers works with youth who are not reached by conventional conflict resolution programs, Steve says. He got the idea for using martial arts while taking a class called War, Peace and Nonresistance at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

"John Howard Yoder suggested that Mennonites might want to learn martial arts as a way of peacemaking … especially aikido," Steve says. "I credit Yoder with a seed that was sown and germinated in our [Walnut Hill Mennonite Church] mission group."

Wes, who introduced Steve to marital arts, personally mentors some of the youth in his martial arts class.

"As a pastor," Steve says, "it's a joy to see Wes get in touch with his gifts. He's a missionary right here in his own community."

Most masters of the discipline believe there is a spiritual dimension to martial arts, Steve says. "So we



A way beyond fight or flight: Wes Higginbotham, a member of Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., is a mentor and instructor in the Peacemakers program. Photos provided by Steve Thomas.

talk about God's Spirit and Jesus as the master of peace. What we're trying to do here is deal with personal violence that is very real in youth culture and against women."

So far 198 women have also participated in three-hour orientation sessions or day-long seminars, mostly on the Goshen College campus.

"This has opened up conversations with people who write Mennonites off because they think we don't deal with real violence."

"We want youth to live in peace," Wes says, "but this is threatened by increasing violence … ranging from bullying to shootings in schools across the country. The effects of this include fear, impaired academic performance, diminished self-esteem, counterviolence and suicide."

The Peacemakers program uses exercises, role plays and physical training to help youth learn to deal with interpersonal conflicts and threatening situations.

"Most of all, we build self-esteem … and respect for one another," Wes says.

If all goes as planned, Wes will begin working full-time in the program later this year.

Everett J. Thomas is editor of The Mennonite.

Teachings of Sensei Ueshiba, founder of Aikido

We train in hopes of being of some use … in bringing peace to people around the world.

The way of a warrior is to stop trouble before it starts. … The aim of the warrior is the restoration of harmony and the preservation of peace.

The art of peace does not rely on weapons or brute force to succeed. … The true meaning of samurai is one who serves and adheres to the power of love.

The art of peace is based on four great virtues: courage, wisdom, love and friendship.

Speak against injustice to immigrants

Kenyetta Twine is director of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Office of Intercultural Relations.

How would you feel if your pastor and his or her family were uprooted from the congregation and required to return to their country of birth? They are an integral part of the congregation and community. They have walked with you and others in various celebrations and trials in life.

Suddenly the government has gone back through previously approved immigration documents and decided the family will have to leave the United States and correct paperwork or reapply. In some instances, the children were born here and remain here in school, so the family is separated for a period of time—at least three months and sometimes even years. In addition, the family may have to give up its residence and lose belongings in the process. Ultimately, the congregation is left without its pastor. (I realize these issues are complex, especially with government bureaucracy, and that some of this may seem too simplified.)

The Bible includes many references to how we should treat immigrants.

There are pastors and their families with legal documents serving churches here in the United States. Some also are bivocational, working full- or part-time in another job. They tend to serve the community surrounding the church as well and being a resource for others in the area. Just as many of your descendants immigrated here at one time for various reasons, these pastors and their families have done the same. They have begun a life here with jobs, children in the school systems and involvement in their communities.

Nevertheless, it seems that the government has targeted the documents of Africans, Central Americans and Mexicans for review. The pastors and families mentioned above are from these regions. Our government also denied visas to 15 Mennonite World Conference delegates who were from African and Central American countries. MWC representatives thought the decisions may have been based on the government's fear that these delegates might not return to their countries. On the contrary, these delegates were pastors or church workers who had families and obligations back at home. Anti-terrorism policies and immigration reform are unfairly impacting those from Africa, Central America and Mexico, and racism and economic injustice seem to be involved.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed HR4437, which is now before the Senate. This bill will make illegal the ministries of many congregations that assist undocumented immigrants with services such as food, transportation, shelter and legal advice, and it will negatively affect immigrant communities. Mennonite Church USA delegates at the 2003 assembly passed an immigration statement "emphasizing that God has called us to welcome immigrants, because all of us are sojourners." The statement also said, "We reject our country's mistreatment of immigrants, repent of our silence and commit ourselves to act with and on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of their legal status."

The Bible includes many references to how we should treat immigrants and encourages us to remember from where we have come (Exodus 22:1; Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:33; Deuteronomy 10:17; 24 and 27:19; Jeremiah 22:1; Matthew 25:31-46; Hebrews 13:1; Luke 10:25-37). It says not to withhold justice from the alien or oppress him or her. It requires us to care for and love aliens and widows. The Word states that we are to allow opportunities for aliens to provide for themselves and their families. Specifically, Deuteronomy 24:17-21 (NIV) says: "Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this. When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow."

I encourage you to speak against injustice to immigrants, support them and let your Senate representatives know how you feel about the immigration reform bill they are considering. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **A Father's Day reflection**—Keith Harder
- **Lessons from the Kaufman case**—Susan Balzer

Bartel named Bethel College president

Attorney from Denver is also moderator of Mountain States Conference.

Barry C. Bartel of Denver will become the 13th president in Bethel College's 119-year history. Bethel College is in North Newton, Kan.

Bartel's appointment ends a year-long search process, the goal of which was "to recruit a long-term president with proven leadership abilities."

Danielle Goering, chair of the presidential search committee, announced the decision to faculty, staff and students during special sessions on May 2. The campus community met Bartel and his family one-on-one during an afternoon open house.

"The search process has been an invigorating time for the presidential search committee," said Goering. "To complete the search with a candidate of Barry Bartel's stature is exciting. His passion and dedication will serve Bethel College well as we plan for the future."

The search committee was drawn to Bartel's servant leadership style, the analytical and communication skills honed in his legal career, his desire to listen and learn and his interest in higher education, Goering said.

The committee was also impressed with his cross-cultural awareness and aptitude, developed through living in Bolivia and Haiti, and his obvious passion for Bethel's rich heritage as well as its future, Goering said.

"Bethel's founders were visionaries when they established the first Mennonite college in North America," Bartel said. "Bethel's leadership, faculty, staff, students and alumni continue to demonstrate that true excellence combines achievement and character, innovation and discipline. I am excited to help carry that vision forward."

Bartel will prepare for the role of president by serving as president-elect, beginning June 1, until his formal inauguration Oct. 8 at Fall Festival. John K. Sheriff will continue as interim president until that time.

The son of Gladwin and Lois Bartel of La Junta, Colo.,—both Bethel College graduates—Bartel was born in Newton and grew up in La Junta. He graduated summa cum laude from Bethel College in 1984 with a triple major in mathematics (computer science emphasis), peace studies, and Bible and religion. While at Bethel, he earned a prestigious Thresher Award for Bible and religion.

"Bethel shaped my life in many ways, by deepening my faith, challenging my intellect and developing my character. It is an honor to be invited to return to help shape Bethel for the future," Bartel said.

Following graduation, Bartel and his wife, Brenda Isaak, a native of Aberdeen, Idaho, and also a 1984 graduate, served for three years as rural community development project coordinators for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Haiti.

Upon their return to the United States, Bartel entered law school at Willamette University College of Law in Salem, Ore., where he served as editor-in-chief of the law review, graduating in 1991. Bartel clerked for Oregon Supreme Court Justice Richard L. Unis for two years, then moved with his family, including son Jordan and daughter Leah, to Lakewood, Colo., to begin his law practice.

By 1998, Brenda's and Barry's passion for the church led them to accept a five-year leadership assignment with MCC in Bolivia, where they directed a multinational staff of 70. Upon completion of their service term in 2003, the Bartels returned to Denver, where Barry resumed his legal career with Holland & Hart LLP. Currently an associate attorney, Bartel focuses on complex commercial litigation involving natural resources.

"Although Barry was not looking for a career change, I believe he was drawn to this opportunity as one which uniquely combines his passion for service with his desire to lead," said Greg Gaeddert, chair of the Bethel College board of directors.

Even while actively pursuing his law career, Bartel remains deeply committed to Mennonite Church USA and to the principles of Anabaptism, Gaeddert said. Bartel currently serves as chair of the leadership board and moderator of the new Mountain States Mennonite Conference as well as chair of Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo.

He is also on the boards of Mennonite Urban Ministries in Denver, the Colorado chapter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates and the Denver Conflict Center.

"Barry exemplifies the type of servant leader for which Bethel College is known. He is intelligent, articulate, humble, caring and passionate about what he believes," Gaeddert said.—*Lori Livengood for Bethel College*

Barry exemplifies the type of servant leader for which Bethel College is known. He is intelligent, articulate, humble, caring and passionate about what he believes.
—Greg Gaeddert

678 graduates in April commencements

Goshen College, Eastern Mennonite University, Eastern Mennonite Seminary

Christians look forward to the day of the great fiesta … when the tongues of the universe will sing the same song, and we will all line up in one great conga line, dancing from one end of heaven to the other.
—Bob Edgar

Goshen College
April 23
240 graduates

More than 350 members of the Goshen (Ind.) College community—soon-to-be graduates and current and retired faculty—marched with appropriate seriousness across campus on April 23 to open the college's 108th commencement services. When the 240 members of the Class of 2006 filed out of the gymnasium of the Gingerich Recreation-Fitness Center an hour and a half later—having been encouraged by commencement speaker Michael A. Mata to "Dance to the Rhythm of a Different Tune"—they were ready to celebrate with family and friends.

They were sent on their way by faculty and administrators who formed a two-sided tunnel (see photo below right) and applauded the graduates—a tradition that also takes place at the beginning of each academic year to welcome students back to campus.

Experiencing a Goshen College commencement for the first time in several decades was Goshen College president-elect James E. Brenneman, who will join the campus full-time on July 1. He told the Class of 2006 that college faculty and administrative leaders wished them each to live out "God's best intentions for you."

Brenneman also introduced Mata, whom he called "mi hermano" (my brother). The commencement speaker, a colleague of Brenneman's on the faculty at the Claremont (Calif.) School of Theology. Mata is the national director of the Tools for Transformation Program of World Vision U.S. and has served for 17 years on the pastoral team of a Nazarene multiethnic/multicongregation church in Los Angeles.

Having focused in ministry and community leadership for the past 25 years, Mata said that while Christians look forward to the coming of God's reign on earth, "the day of the great fiesta … when the tongues of the universe will sing the same song and we will all line up in one great conga line, dancing from one end of heaven to the other, … we can experience elements and dimensions of the reign of God here and now."

Mata charged the graduates to "dance to a different rhythm … love for those who do not love or have been hurt by love, and to dream a dream for those who do not or are not able to dream."

As one sign of their interest in living out their values, 73 members—about one third—of the class of 2006 signed a pledge, part of a national program, that states they will "explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organizations for which I work."

Represented in this year's graduating class were students from 18 different states, including 124 from Indiana, and 16 countries. The departing seniors represented 31 programs of study. The academic program with the largest number of graduating students was nursing, which held its pinning ceremony on April 22 to recognize the 58 individuals who completed a degree—28 through Goshen's traditional, four-year program and 30 through the degree-completion program offered through the college's Division of Adult and External Studies.—*Jodi Beyeler for Goshen College*

Eastern Mennonite Seminary
April 29
33 graduates

Eastern Mennonite Seminary's commencement was held April 29 on its campus in Harrisonburg, Va. The 33 members of the seminary class of 2006 included the highest number of people in the last 10 years to receive the three-year master of divini-

Jodi H. Beyeler

As the 240 members of the Goshen College Class of 2006 exited the commencement service on April 23, they were sent on their way by faculty and administrators, who formed a two-sided tunnel and applauded the graduates—a tradition that also takes place at the beginning of each academic year to welcome students back to campus.

Jim Bishop

Eastern Mennonite University's commencement speaker Bob Edgar closed his address by pronouncing a Franciscan blessing on the EMU class of 2006.

ty degree: 25. It was also the largest graduating class in the last nine years, second only to the class of 1997, which had 36 members.

Graduation speaker Cheryl J. Sanders, pastor of Third Street Church of God in Washington, spoke on "A Holy Calling," citing marks of ministry that the Apostle Paul commended to his young protege Timothy and are applicable to members of the graduating class.

"You are gifted, you are called and you are appointed," Sanders told the class. "Don't be shy in exercising your spiritual gifts; be courageous. Let the power of God flow through you to others."

A vacant chair was placed on the stage in recognition of Lawrence M. Yoder, professor of missiology, who was recuperating from quintuple bypass heart surgery performed earlier in the week.

Eastern Mennonite University
April 30
405 graduates

Robert W. (Bob) Edgar had a message for the 405 members of the Eastern Mennonite University's graduating class of 2006: You are the prophets, the disciples and the leaders we have been waiting for.

"You look ready," Edgar told the graduates during EMU's 88th annual commencement, held April 30 on the front lawn of the school's campus. Upward of 4,000 people filled the colorful outdoor setting.

"God always calls average, ordinary people to do the extraordinary, to make the big difference," said Edgar, who is the general secretary of the National Council of Churches of the U.S. "You are graduating into a world of darkness, so please be light bearers," he said. "In a dark time, the eye begins to see. We are the hope-givers of this fragile planet. The world needs you urgently. It needs you now."

The speaker passed on the advice of a New York City cab driver, who said, "One cannot survive five minutes under water without air. But one cannot survive one second without hope."

Edgar concluded his address by asking all the graduates to stand, place their hand on the shoulder of the person next to him or her and receive a Franciscan benediction (see photo above).

EMU President Loren E. Swartzendruber conferred 314 undergraduate, 87 graduate, two associate degrees and two graduate certificates during the ceremonies.

The graduates included a mother and daughter who graduated together: Regina B. Schweitzer of Harrisonburg received a master's degree in business administration, and Carlita S. Schweitzer a bachelor's degree in social work.

The undergraduate class presented a check for $4,306, which included a match of $2,006 from Bibb Frazier of Frazier Quarry in Harrisonburg, to purchase bluestone benches to be placed around the front campus fountain.

The class had 106 honor graduates with cumulative grade point averages between 3.6 and 4.0, including four students with perfect 4.0 GPAs over their four years of study at EMU. EMU is located in Harrisonburg, Va.—*Jim Bishop for Eastern Mennonite University*

Don't be shy in exercising your spiritual gifts; be courageous. —Cheryl J. Saners

Jim Bishop

EMS graduates (from left) James H. Rhee, Stephens City, Va., and originally from Korea; Mitsunari Nakashima, Ichinomiya, Japan; and Wei Wu, Beijing, China

Reconciliation for Japanese and Koreans

Koreans confront Japanese atrocities committed against them in World War II.

NAHM, Sang-Uhk

Members of Jesus Village Church in Chun Chon, South Korea, gather around Japanese visitors for prayer during the Japanese group's visit to Korea in early April.

For many in South Korea, Japan is still the enemy. Sixty years after the end of World War II ended Japan's 35-year occupation of the Korean peninsula.

Koreans' history lessons still teach them of the atrocities committed—resources stripped, dissidents jailed and killed, mothers and daughters forced to work as "comfort women" in Japanese brothels.

Koreans learn to hate the Japanese, but groups of Anabaptists now hope to reconcile their nations' histories of anger and hatred through group visits, shared experiences and personal commitments.

Since his experience listening to Koreans and Chinese talk about unhealed wounds with Japan at a 2003 theological consultation at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., Kaz Enomoto has thought much about Japan's role in the region. This year, before representatives from 12 countries at a Mennonite mission consultation in Macau March 13-16, Enomoto asked for forgiveness.

Enomoto, a Japan native working in Tokyo through Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness, told listeners at the consultation that if Christians cannot live in peace within the body, then faith becomes only a personal matter and has no power to transform the world. Japan's salvation, he continued, would not be complete without reconciliation.

Listening from the crowd, Kyung-Jung Kim paused at the word reconciliation. As a Korean, he was taught to hate the Japanese. But as Enomoto finished speaking, the Korea Anabaptist Center office manager rose, and the Spirit moved. The Korean offered forgiveness to the Japanese man. The pair embraced.

"I wasn't there. He wasn't there. But somehow we're still carrying the same burdens from our parents' generations," Kyong-Jung said. "I felt I gained one brother."

More reconciliation may come. A group of Mennonites from Tokyo recently spent March 29-April 4 in South Korea. The group toured museums that chronicled the atrocities committed during the occupation of Korea, even visiting the House of Sharing community outside Seoul and speaking to one of the female victims.

The Japanese group joined a worship service at Jesus Village Church in Chun Chon, South Korea, where the Japanese and Koreans committed to pray for the relationship between their two countries and that they, as reconcilers, may spread the gospel of peace.

Daniel Ahn, a Jesus Village Church leader, said the joint worship carried meaning.

"No one said, 'This is a moment of reconciliation.' But we felt it," Ahn said. "We share Jesus. Through the love of Jesus we can break down the old history."

According to Kyong-Jung, the visit also was educational for Koreans, who grow up learning to hate Japan.

"It is so hard for us, even though we are Korean Christians, to rebuild relationships [with Japan]," Kyong-Jung said.

"But if Christians do not talk about peace and reconciliation with Christians and neighbors, then we miss the whole point." Kyong-Jung said.—*Ryan Miller for Mennonite Mission Network*

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Values-Based Leadership Program

Church officials get answers about visas

State Department official explains why MWC leaders were denied entrance.

Interpretation of regulations related to economic and immigration issues have become more rigorous in the United States since 9-11. Every applicant for a U.S. nonimmigrant visa between the ages of 14 and 80 is now required to be interviewed and is assumed to be an intended immigrant. No amount of documentation provided by an agency or a U.S. political leader will suffice to gain visa approval. The decision of a consular officer who grants a visa cannot be overridden by a supervisor or even an ambassador. If the applicant proves to be a terrorist or an illegal immigrant, the official who granted the visa will be held personally liable.

These revelations both stunned church leaders and helped explain recent visa denials when the delegation met with Julie A. Furuta-Toy, director, Office of Public and Diplomatic Liaison/Visa Services at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) office in Washington on April 26.

The meeting was arranged after more than 10 percent of delegates to meetings of the general council of Mennonite World Conference in Pasadena, Calif., in March were absent because the U.S. government denied them entry visas. MWC's general council issued a statement of their concerns that the delegation presented to Furuta-Toy. The delegation hoped to learn how to achieve greater success in the future when internationals apply for visas to attend church-related gatherings in the United States.

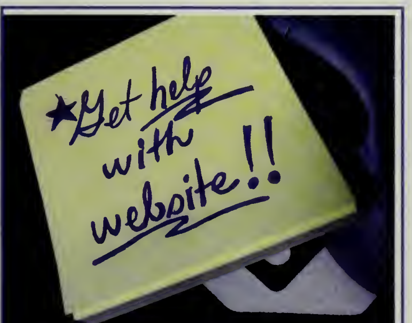
Heading the delegation were Nancy Heisey, MWC president, and Larry Miller, MWC general secretary. Others were Robb Davis, executive director of MCC; J. Daryl Byler, director, MCC Washington Office; Ruth Hoover Zimmerman, co-director, Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University; Richard Showalter, president, Eastern Mennonite Missions; and Denton Lotz, general secretary, Baptist World Alliance. Each of the agencies represented have experienced visa difficulties.

The delegation agreed that Furuta-Toy was responsive, extending a scheduled one-hour meeting to two hours. She told Miller that she would be in touch with him regarding the MWC visa refusals and invited other members of the delegation to contact her if further problems arise.

A significant learning was the importance of assisting applicants to prepare for their oral interview. Applicants must be able to explain to the consular interviewer the purpose of the trip and what professional or career interest in their home country is served by the visit. They must also convince the officer that they will return to their country.

"We learned a lot but came away sobered by how difficult things really are," said Heisey. She said that implementation of security provisions post-Sept. 11 have greatly increased the harshness of the visa application process.—*Ferne Burkhardt for Mennonite World Conference*

We learned a lot but came away sobered by how difficult things really are.
—Nancy Heisey



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Congolese Mennonites running for office

Mennonite Central Committee will provide funds to train election observers.

Congolese Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren are becoming engaged in the political process as their country prepares to hold democratic elections this year. Congo has two Mennonite denominations and one Mennonite Brethren denomination with a combined membership of about 194,000, according to Mennonite World Conference.

Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly known as Zaire, was devastated by decades of corrupt dictatorship and a civil war from 1998 to 2003. Fighting continues in Congo's northeastern region and extreme poverty is widespread. Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren are encouraging their church members and fellow citizens to participate in this year's elections as a way to revitalize their country.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is supporting a joint effort by these denominations to prepare their churches for elections. Together, the denominations are training several thousand Congolese Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren to serve as conflict mediators and election observers in their communities. They are also sending civic educators to teach churches and community groups about voting in a democracy.

"The Mennonite vision is to rebuild the country with nonviolent methods," says Pascal Kulungu, a Mennonite Brethren lay leader who is serving as chair of the interdenominational effort.

MCC is providing $84,000 to train conflict mediators, election observers and civic educators and to host a group of about 20 international election observers. MCC purchased posters that civic educators are using to teach democratic concepts to voters who may not know how to read. The posters depict the process of voting, warn against corrupt leaders and illustrate ideas such as equal rights and economic development.

Congo has not had a democratic election since 1960, and Cold War politics divided its first democratically elected leaders. Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, a nationalist who sought support from the Soviet Union, was kidnapped and executed by forces loyal to President Joseph Kasa Vubu, who received military support from the United States and Belgium. Four years later, Joseph Mobutu, an army commander who helped kidnap Lumumba, ousted President Kasa Vubu and installed himself as a dictator until his death in 1997.

While Congolese Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren did not hold government positions under Mobutu, Kulungu reports that some church members are now running for high offices.

"There will be Mennonites who will be senators, who will be deputies, and there is one who wants to be president," Kulungu says.

Muyima Hosea, a Congolese Mennonite professor who lives in South Africa, is one of 33 registered presidential candidates. The elections are scheduled for July 30.—*Tim Shenk for Mennonite Central Committee*

> There will be Mennonites who will be senators, who will be deputies, and there is one who wants to be president.
> —Pascal Kulung

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WORKERS

Bergstresser, Deron Brill, was ordained April 23 as pastor at Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Brown, Calvin Harris, April 8, to David Hupp and Katy Gray Brown, Minneapolis

Carr, Jacob Lloyd, April 11, to Robert and Julie Dale Carr, Denver

DiGuardi, Isaiah John, April 21, to Zac and Alice Yoder DiGuardi, Johnstown, Pa.

Falk, Christopher Roth and James Roth (twins), April 10, to Thom and Susan Roth Falk, Denver

Hunsberger, Tanner Kate, April 30, to Reuben and Jeri Speigle Hunsberger, Johnstown, Pa.

Kropf, Ezekial Hostetter, March 31, to Jesse and Marla Hostetter Kropf, Denver, Colo.

Landgraff, Anouk Elise, April 2, to Ryan and Bethany Parmer Landgraff, Harrisonburg, Va.

Miller, Jadon Elias, March 6, to Keith and Rhoda Showalter Miller, Central Asia.

Nolt, Ashlyn Cadence, April 9, to Chadwick and Valerie Carmen Nolt, Mount Joy, Pa.

Ritchie, Dylan Ray, April 11, to Mike and Amy Friend Ritchie, Middlebury, Ind.

Short, Levi James, April 19, to James and Amanda Hathaway Short, Wauseon, Ohio.

Slider, Madison Ranae, April 19, to James and Karina Raber Slider, Hartville, Ohio.

Stoltzfus, Claire Renee, April 19, to Dwight and Melanie Balmer Stoltzfus, Somerset, Pa.

Tieszen, Claire Hershey, April 16, to Jonathan and Julie Hershey Tieszen, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

Bogen/West: Angela Bogen, Centreville, Mich., and Benjamin West, Ft. Wayne, April 8 at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Burr Oak, Mich.

Kauffman/Stutzman: Phyllis King Kauffman, Atlanta, Ga., and Doug Stutzman, Hesston, Kan., April 15 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Keim/Zook: Sharisa Keim, Harrisonburg, Va., and Craig Zook, Harrisonburg, April 8 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

DEATHS

Bergey, Trent Logan, stillborn, Franconia, Pa., died April 16. Parents: Kevin and Teresa Bergey. Funeral: April 19 graveside service at Franconia Mennonite Cemetery.

Buhler, Leucile, 99, Bluffton, Ohio, died April 15. Spouse: Gerhard Buhler (deceased). Children: Genevieve Fast, Joanne Voth, Ruth Graber, Gerhard Samuel (deceased); 11 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren.

Coronado, Juan Francisco, 45, Pettisville, Ohio, died April 19. Spouse: Gloria Maldonado-Perez Coronado. Children: Rosy, Yari, Ines. Funeral: April 22 at Pettisville (Ohio) Cemetery.

Frey, Adin L., 82, Chambersburg, Pa., died March 6. Spouse: Janet L. Frey. Parents: David and Fannie Martin Frey. Children: Eugene, Linda Horst, Fern Diller, Miriam Hawbaker, Wilmer; 19 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at Chambersburg Mennonite Church.

Gephart, Virginia, Boyertown, Pa., died April 7. Spouse: Kenneth Gephart (deceased). Children: June Morris, Keith (deceased); six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 13 at Boyertown Mennonite Church.

Guntz, Katie Freed, 84, Souderton, Pa., died April 21. Spouse: John B. Guntz. Parents: Oswin and Mary Ann Hackman Freed. Children: Wilma Hathaway, Dolores Hathaway, John Lester, Kathy Frederick, Miriam Leatherman, Merle, David; 15 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Summit View Chapel.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

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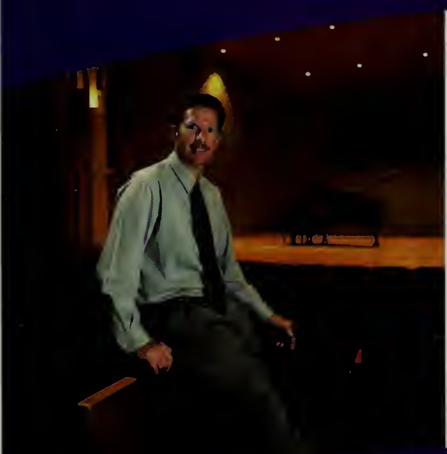

"On the Bluffton University campus, there is never the assumption that a student or faculty or staff member is Mennonite. We are all part of God's global family. Because of that, we, who are Mennonite, have the opportunity to really share about our faith and learn about the faith of others. To be missional means to reach out to others, to be intentional in the sharing of our faith and the modeling of our lives. I have seen this happen in the classroom, on the sidewalk, at meetings, during cross-cultural experiences, and through projects/activities that promote peace and justice."

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Hochstetler, Edna Swartzentruber, 73, Nappanee, Ind., died April 25. Spouse: Dean Hochstetler. Parents: John and Ruth Esch Swartzentruber. Children: Clari, Verle, Lee; eight grandchildren. Funeral: May 1 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Horst, Paul M., 88, Chambersburg, Pa., died March 10. Spouse: Elizabeth Ebersole Horst (deceased). Parents: Martin and Christianna Martin Horst. Children: James R., Eunice Banzhoff, Dorothy Wadel; 10 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 15 at Chambersburg Mennonite Church.

Lehman, Margaret V., 100, Chambersburg, Pa., died April 5. Spouse: Abram Frey (deceased). Parents: David and Sarah Burkhart Paxton. Children: D. Ralph, Marie Eby; 12 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 8 at Chambersburg Mennonite Church.

Litwiller, Aaron Jr., 81, Hopedale, Ill., died April 29. Spouse: Ruth Crumrine Litwiller (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Lena Egli Litwiller. Children: Lonnie, Perry, Doug; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 3 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Martin, Ronald O., 68, Granger, Ind., died April 15. Spouse: Janice M. Birkey Martin. Parents: Ellis M. and Clyda Geiser Martin. Children: Janell L. Martin, Mark R.; two grandchildren. Funeral: April 19 at Olive Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Miller, Raymond, 81, Winesburg, Ohio, died Feb. 13. Spouse: Betty Mann Miller. Parents: Jonathan and Anna Hochstetler Miller. Children: Marlin, Wava, Arden, Layden, Regina Hershberger; stepchildren Deborah Rogers, Diane Myers, Bryan; 12 grandchildren; five great grandchildren; 10 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Winesburg.

Schrock, Montey, 72, Howe, Ind., died April 24. Spouse: Rollin Schrock. Parents: Forrest O. and Mildred Sigler Bowman. Children: Brenda McClure, James, Scott, Michael (deceased); seven grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Emma Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind.

Stutzman, Thelma, 86, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Raymon Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Wesley and Emma Yoder Stutzman. Children: Curtis, Thomas, Timothy, Dallas; 10 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Holechek Chapel, Chappell, Neb.

Summer, Cleva Miller, 92, Elsie, Mich., died April 10. Spouse: Milo Summer (deceased). Parents: Oliver and Alta Mast Miller. Children: David, Philip, George, Karen Short, Sharon Wall, Mary Kaufman; 18 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 15 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Ashley, Mich.

Woelk, Frank Jr., 50, Newport, Wash., died March 25. Spouse: Mollie Woelk. Parents: Frank and Edna Fast Woelk. Children: Sam, Ben, Joanna Boe, Suzi Welden, Rob Cox, Jason Cox, Dorothy Cox Kaveshan; 13 grandchildren. Funeral: April 1 at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Newport.

Internal Auditor

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking an internal auditor to conduct, coordinate, and design internal audits and compliance reviews and to maintain the business continuity plan. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree in business, accounting, or related field; possess or have the ability to obtain credentials for conducting trust audits. Knowledge of financial services and insurance products and/or CPA preferred.

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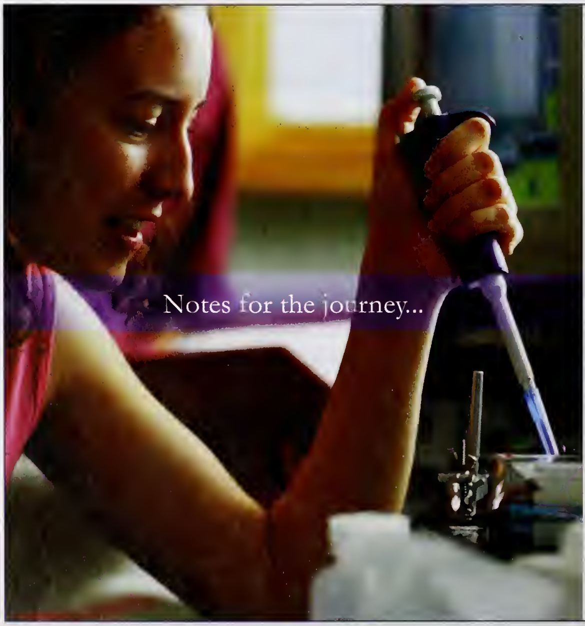
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Find out more about Goshen at www.goshen.edu

GOSHEN COLLEGE

Oaklawn in Goshen, Ind., is growing and in need of the following positions:

Nurse manager—child/adolescent: The nurse manager will coordinate child and adolescent intensive services and supervise inpatient staff at our Lakeview Drive facility in Goshen. Requirements include a graduate of an accredited school of nursing and current Indiana Registered Nurse license. Previous management or charge nurse experience; prior experience in psychiatric/behavioral health setting; experience with children and adolescents, as well as BSN preferred.

Registered nurses: We are offering a variety of options for RNs including: part-time 2nd and 3rd shift adult inpatient unit, full-time and part-time 2nd shift on child/adolescent residential units, part-time 2nd shift child/adolescent inpatient unit, part-time 1st shift senior inpatient, and inpatient float positions open to all shifts, as well as a full-time days outpatient RN position. Requirements include a graduate of an accredited school of nursing with current Indiana RN license. Sign-on bonus available.

You can mail, fax or email a resumé to Attn: Human Resources, Oaklawn, P.O. Box 809, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 574-537-2698; or humanresources@oaklawn.org. You may visit our Web site at www.oaklawn.org for other opportunities. Equal Opportunity Employer

Petitcodiac Mennonite Church is looking for at least ***2 couples to work with the Ten Thousand Villages program*** in Petitcodiac, NB, Canada, for the fall 2006 season. Full-time responsibilities include working in the warehouse during the week and traveling to festival sale locations throughout Atlantic Canada on the weekends. For a detailed job description contact Arloa Bontrager (MNN) at 574-523-3058 or Helen Lapp (MARP) at 215-721-7730.

Arizona voluntary service opportunities. **Goldensun**, together with Phoenix area Mennonite churches, offer ***Christian service and vocational opportunities*** while living in community with adult people with developmental disabilities. Contact Leroy Willems, 623-219-9647 or email Leroy.w@cox.net.

Pastor responsible for youth ministry:

Hillcrest Mennonite Church, a midsized congregation on the edge of New Hamburg, Ont., a member of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and Mennonite Church Canada is looking for a .8 FTE pastor responsible for youth ministry (birth to age 25) to work in a team along with our full-time pastor. Ministry areas include being a resource to families with children, developing relationships with children and youth, working with youth leaders to support our programs like Venture Club, junior youth, youth group and junior Sunday school. The position will also involve preaching, teaching, counseling, weddings, funerals and other worship-related activities along with our full-time pastor.

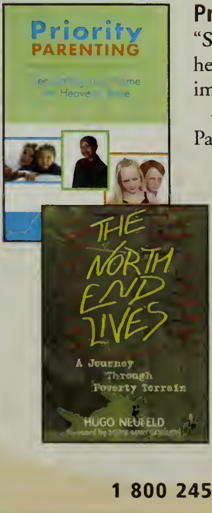
If interested, please ask for our profile form or send your resumé to Muriel Bechtel, M.C.E.C. Conference Minister, 4489 King Street E., Kitchener, Ont., N2P 2G2; 519-650-3806; 800-206-9356; email Muriel@mcec.on.ca.

Iowa Mennonite School, grades 9-12, invites applications for: full-time ***Spanish teacher***, half-time ***family and consumer science teacher***. To apply send resumé to Wilbur Yoder, Principal, 1421 540th St. SW, Kalona, IA 52247, phone 319-656-2073, email wyoder@yahoo.com.

Bluffton (Ohio) University seeks applicants for the position of ***admissions counselor***. This position has primary responsibility for recruiting students from a specified area. It requires regular travel, weekend and evening hours and communication with prospective students and families. The candidate will be able to articulate the benefits of a Christian, liberal arts, residential university setting. In addition, the candidate will have an appreciation and understanding of the Mennonite faith perspective. A bachelor's degree is required. Specific information about this position and the search process is available at http://www.bluffton.edu/about/employment/.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Kristene Miller, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.



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In one of the oldest neighborhoods of Hamilton, Ontario, Hugo and Doreen Neufeld worked among residents of the city's North End at a community center called the Welcome Inn. These stories recount the struggles and giftedness of the North Enders the Neufelds have known and served. Their vivid experiences of love and friendship powerfully demonstrate that the Good News to the poor is also Good News to the rich. The stories shared in these pages, while unique to the Hamilton setting, are unfolding wherever poverty exists.

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Bay Shore Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla., is seeking applicants for ***minister of worship/music***. Please contact Mary Ann Lederman at 941-377-1956 after 5 p.m., or email rmalederman@msn.com.

English conversation teachers needed! **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society seeks an experienced ***administrator*** to lead the Society into the next phase of its growth. The Society encompasses nine staff at two sites in Lancaster County, Pa., and includes a living history site, museum, library, archives, educational programming and retail store. In collaboration with the board of directors, the administrator will be responsible to carry forward a long-range plan. Those interested, send a letter of application and resumé of education and experience to the Society. The position requires demonstrated administrative, leadership and communication skills. Preference given to candidates with relevant experience, education and understanding of Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage. The administrator is responsible for all daily operation of the Society, including finances, fund-raising, educational programming, publicity, public relations, advertising, maintaining facilities and personnel. The position reports to the board. Available Aug. 1, 2006. To apply, send a letter of application and a full vita to Personnel, LMHS, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602 or email lmhs@lmhs.org.

Locust Grove Mennonite Church, a church of 200 people near Sturgis, Mich., seeks 3/4 to full-time ***music director***. Requirements: Anabaptist commitment in faith and life, gift of presence in leading worship, sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and musical leadership abilities, including instrumental accompaniment (guitar or piano) to congregational singing. Other responsibilities, such as administration, youth or outreach, would be added based on the skills/interests of the applicant. Contact Dana Sommers at dsommers@net-link.net.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2006.

Seeking ***dorm life director*** to lead dorm program and develop a nurturing, caring, Christ-centered community. Responsibilities include managing dorm staff, planning weekday and weekend activities, providing a safe, enjoyable, learning environment and being a role model and mentor for youth. Leadership and youth work experience desired. Must be willing to work with students from different cultures.

Assistant dorm life director to provide planning, leadership and management support for the dorm life director. The dorm life positions could be filled as a husband and wife team.

Food services director to direct food preparation and supervise kitchen staff. Manage inventory, record keeping, the federal lunch program and student assistants. Ensure health standards are followed. Create a healthy atmosphere for students and staff. Experience required.

Contact Mike Wenger at mwenger@westernmenno-niteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

High school math/science teacher for algebra and introduction to physical science. Full-time position with opportunities to coach. Contact Darrel Camp at dcamp@westernmenno-niteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students locally and from various states/provinces/countries. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ. All positions are full-time, 10 months, with benefits.

Philadelphia Mennonite High School (grades 9-12) seeks applicants for the following positions for the 2006-07 school year: ***PT English instructor, FT science/math instructor, PT guidance counselor, PT custodian/maintenance***. Please send resumé to Barbara Moses, Principal, Philadelphia Mennonite High School, 860 N. 24th St., Philadelphia, PA 19130; fax 215-769-4063; email mos147@comcast.net.

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Church Relations Manager

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Larry Martin, church revitalization consultant
Asbury Seminary students (will join tour in Kentucky)

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Marissa King graduated from Hesston College last spring, "primed for an experience outside the U.S. and outside my comfort zone." She spent four months in Guatemala improving her Spanish skills, learning culture, and serving at a hospice and at a medical clinic. She returned to her hometown of Sturgis, Mich., where she serves others in the English as a Second Language program at Wall Elementary School.

Marissa made the most of a key advantage of choosing a two-year college: an obvious time to stop for Christian service in the midst of one's education. About one in 20 Hesston College graduates does a term of service right after Hesston. Prepare yourself. Put your faith into action.

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How to save 30,000 U.S. lives each year

Gordon Houser

If the adage is true that we are what we eat, we're in trouble, because some of what we are is loaded with trans fats.

In an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* last month, writer Nina Teicholz refers to a study by Danish researchers published a week earlier in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. After collecting and analyzing food from 20 countries, she writes, "the researchers found that there are far more trans fats in McDonald's meals in the United States than in the same McDonald's fare in most other parts of the world."

What are trans fats, and why is this even important? Teicholz explains: "Trans fats, which are basically a form of hardened vegetable oil, are a staple ingredient in our foods because they're cheaper than butter and they guarantee a long shelf life. Trans fats are also easily manipulated, able to give a Goldfish cracker its crunch, for instance, or make frosting creamy."

The problem is that they raise the "bad cholesterol" (L.D.L.) and lower the good (H.D.L.). "A daily intake of five grams of trans fats," Teicholz writes, "increases the risk of contracting heart disease 4 percent to 28 percent, various studies have shown."

A large order of fries at a U.S. McDonald's contains almost six grams of trans fat, and 10 Chicken McNuggets have about four grams. How bad is that? Teicholz writes, "The National Academy of Sciences concluded in 2002 that the only safe amount of trans fats in the diet is zero."

McDonald's isn't the only place to find trans fats. The Food and Drug Administration has ruled that, beginning this year, trans fats must be listed on package labels. So if you look at the cookies, cakes, crackers, frozen foods and margarines (all high in trans fats) that you buy at the store, you can see these listed.

However, this ruling does not cover unpackaged food or food sold at restaurants, at least here in the United States. That's not the case in Denmark, where, "since 2004, the Danes have limited trans fats to no more than 2 percent of a food's fat content, by weight." And that includes all foods, both packaged and that served in restaurants, hospitals, airlines or stadiums.

Why are we in this country dragging our feet? Free enterprise? "The major fat and oil producers—Bunge, Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland," Teicholz writes, "are already in a position to roll out trans-fat substitutes in large quantities and, for the most part, at comparable prices. And restaurant and bakery owners have little to fear from a changeover." She spoke to Danish manufacturers, who said the changeover was no big deal.

Teicholz concludes, "Getting rid of trans fats is an easy fix that could save, by conservative estimates, 30,000 lives a year in the United States."

For now, we're on our own, required to read those labels and, wherever we eat, take our chances. It's always a good idea to think about what you eat—and who you are. TM

FILMS

CSA: Confederate States of America (NR) is a mockumentary that looks at America as if the Confederacy won the Civil War. It mixes a mock historical film with commercials such as for insurance to protect your property (slaves). A note at the end tells us some of the products it shows were actual, such as Darky Toothpaste. While unsettling, the commercials feel repetitive, and the satire could have had a stronger bite to it by aiming closer to today's reality. (Arlo Kasper, retired drama teacher at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., appears as Abe Lincoln.)

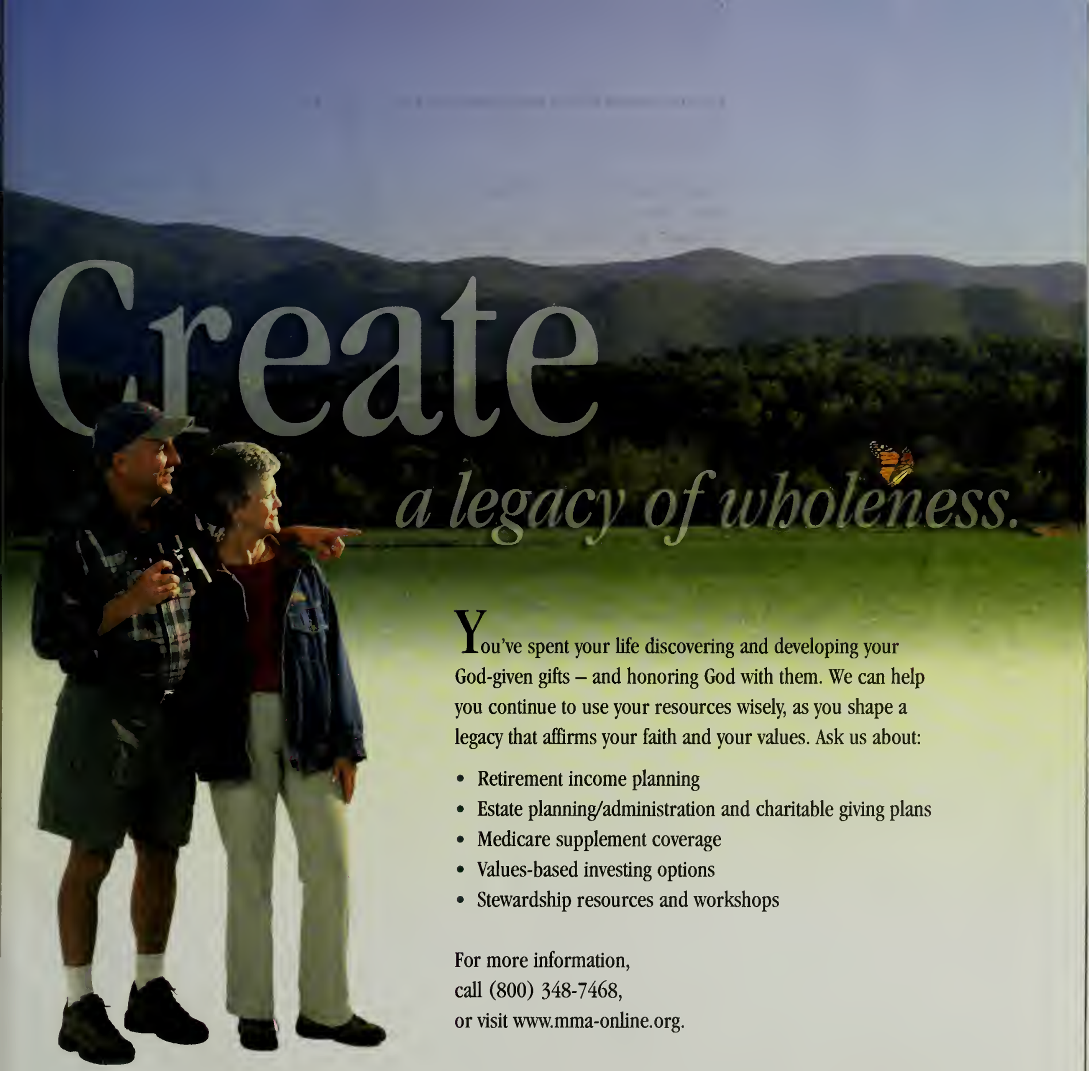
DVDS

Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room (R) is an outstanding documentary about the leaders of Enron and how they used their talents in ways that led that company into bankruptcy. This riveting, clearly presented film reveals the power of greed, that deadly sin, over human goodness.

BOOKS

John Howard Yoder: Mennonite Patience, Evangelical Witness, Catholic Convictions by Mark Thiessen Nation (Eerdmans, 2006, $20) offers an insider's introduction to Yoder, a leading Christian witness against violence who articulated a theology from his Mennonite tradition so powerful that it compelled people from many other traditions to take notice. The book explores Yoder's context, his keen interest in the Anabaptist tradition, his sustained engagement with other Christians and other faiths and his claim that pacifism is inherent in Jesus' message. Yoder, who died at age 70 in 1997, "inspired a whole generation of Christians to follow the way of Jesus into social action and peacemaking," wrote Jim Wallis. While Nation verges on hagiography at times, he also offers some critique of Yoder's thought. Overall, this is the definitive overview of Yoder's work and of the impact of that work on the broader Christian community.

United 93 (R) opened in theaters nationwide April 28 after public discussion about whether it was "too soon" to release a movie that dealt with the events of Sept. 11, 2001. This gut-wrenching film by Paul Greengrass captures the drama of the one hijacked commercial airliner that day that did not reach its intended target. The film not only drew the second-highest audience for films showing that weekend but received positive reviews from critics and viewers alike. The most powerful films are verisimilar (true to life), and that's the case here. Greengrass, who made the excellent *Bloody Sunday* (2002), tells this story clearly, without the intrusion of ideology or sentiment. He places viewers with air traffic controllers, military technicians and the people on United Flight 93. The film does not glorify the passengers or vilify the hijackers but shows all of them as complex, confused and afraid. This film also engages universal themes of mortality, courage and religious belief.—*gh*



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Everett J. Thomas

Write a letter

The continuing slaughter and displacement of Darfurians in the Sudan is the worst humanitarian crisis in our world today. Each member of the Mennonite church can do what Mennonite Central Committee advocates: Write a letter to elected U.S. officials. To help in this task, we are printing the sample letter MCC provides on its Web site (see box).

But why is this intractable tragedy happening in the first place? Harold Miller, MCC's country representative in the Sudan, provides some background to this clash of cultures between Arabs moving down from the north and African farmers who have lived in southern Darfur for millennia.

"The Arab pastoral peoples of Northern Darfur have long been in a steady and growing competition for land with the settled African farmers of southern Darfur," Miller writes. "This competition has been exacerbated by the southward expansion of the Sahara Desert and by the perceived dictates of the 'civilizing' mission of pastoral Arabs. Within Sudanese Islam (and to some degree in African Islam generally), higher social and spiritual status is accorded to Arabs who take seriously their mandate to civilize African peoples considered to be of lower status."

The Sudanese government is covertly helping these Arab Muslims from the north. Adding to the volatility of this situation is Osama bin Laden's recent call for al Queda to help the Sudanese government in its attempts to crush the resistance emerging from African farmers who have organized two armed groups to defend themselves: the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Joint Equality Movement.

Hundreds of thousands of people have died—and are dying—in this region. More than 2 million are displaced, but the United Nations recently cut back on food supplies to them, citing "donor fatigue." Now is not the time to walk away from the problems in Darfur. Each of us can call on our government to stay involved. One quick way to get contact information for elected officials is through www.congress.org. Of course, MCC also welcomes contributions to its relief efforts in Sudan.—*ejt*

The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated June 6, 2006.

Dear [politician's name],

I write out of concern for those who suffer from the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan. The ethnic and political conflict in Darfur has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians in the last two years. Those who survive, especially the more than 2 million civilians who have been attacked and made homeless, cry out for justice.

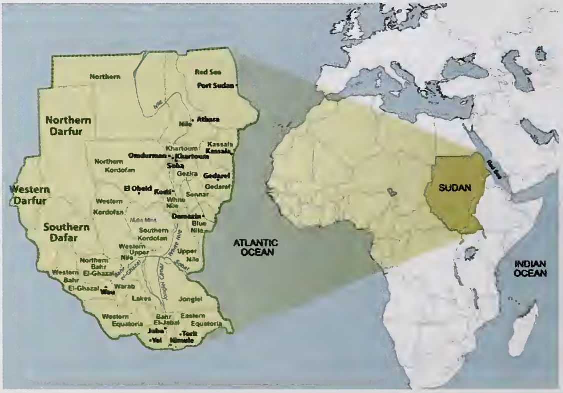
I call on the government of the United States to respond to this humanitarian crisis:

- **to use all possible diplomatic and economic means to encourage all warring parties to stop the violence and bring security to civilians in Darfur;**
- **to support the African Union in its attempts to solve the conflict;**
- **to strengthen an arms embargo against all involved, and to provide humanitarian aid to those who have been driven into crowded camps by the violence;**
- **to ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses in Darfur be prosecuted for their crimes under international law;**
- **to continue to support and encourage the peace processes in place for the conflict in Southern Sudan.**

I pray that justice and peace will soon come to those who suffer in Darfur.

Sincerely,

[your name]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Western Darfur
El Obeid
Kosti
Sennar
Western Kordofan
White Nile
Damazin
Blue Nile
Nuba Mts.
Southern Kordofan
Southern Dafar
Western Upper Nile
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Jonglei Canal
Western Bahr El-Ghazal
Wau
Warab
Lakes
Jonglei
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The Mennonite

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June 6, 2006

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Noses against the screen

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

We have a cat named Kirby. He was originally an outdoor cat but soon proved to have no survival skills at all. Wounded by a car and then an unkind neighbor, Kirby is now the world's most expensive ex-barn cat. He is also an indoor cat for good.

With the possible exception of eating, the thing Kirby likes best is sitting on the dresser and looking out the window. When it's warm and the window is open, he perches with his front paws on the sill and smells whatever is available. He can sit there much of the day until, exhausted from such adventure, he curls up in his box and takes a nap.

I learned the art of anthropomorphism from my mother. She often attributed thoughts and feelings to our pets. Whether she was projecting onto the dog or the dog was channeling her, I cannot say. But to my childhood mind she seemed to know just what Corkie was thinking.

I can't help seeing in Kirby a longing for a carefree world where he can move about without fear. Longing for a better world than the one he has so far experienced. A perfect world, full of catnip and cool water and sunny places to stretch out for a nap whenever the mood strikes.

Maybe I am projecting onto poor Kirby cat my own longing for redemption. Or maybe what I see in Kirby is what Paul talks about in Romans 8. The "creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God," Paul writes. The creation has a stake in our finally becoming who God has always intended us to be. With our healing comes the healing of creation.

With Christ will come healing for every wound caused by sin, the wounds every human being has endured as a result of our own sin and the sin of others, plus the wounds done to earth and air and water and sky, to cats and dogs and all creatures whose creation gave God such pleasure. Perhaps what I see in Kirby's hunched shoulders is the anticipation and longing felt by all of God's creation, waiting as it is for Christ's return.

Unlike Kirby, I can imagine what such a world might be like: a peaceable kingdom in which all God's creatures exist together without fear and in God's presence. I long for this world, though I've never seen it. It creates within me a peculiarly future-oriented nostalgia, carrying within it the history of human longing for a world in which all is at last on earth as it has always been in heaven.

We glimpse this future perfection whenever we gather for worship. Our songs and prayers and words of praise reflect that reign. The way we welcome friends and strangers to worship in word and at the table reveals something about where we're headed. When we worship together we, like Kirby, press our noses against that dark screen that separates us from the fullness of God's reign. And what we see, no matter how incomplete and even distorted, nurtures our longing for redemption for ourselves and the whole creation.

We also glimpse our redemption in the less formal acts of community. In laughing over a story well told or hugging after a good cry, we catch a hint of the perfect community that awaits us. We see the same in nature, in sitting on the beach and listening to the surf and the seagulls and watching the pelicans drift by. Or hiking through the woods to the sounds of birds and running water and leaves under our feet. God's creation retains vestiges of its original goodness, and they in turn point to the perfection still to be revealed.

Someday, in the words of Saint Julian of Norwich, all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well. In the meantime, Kirby and I keep looking out the window and waiting. Waiting for the day when we and the world will finally be made whole. It can't come soon enough. TM

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 11, June 6, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Anabaptists and Mennonites

I resonate with much of what Walter Klaassen has to say in his provocative May 2 article "Anabaptists and Mennonites." However, I can't agree with Klaassen in his plea that we stop claiming Anabaptism as part of our identity. In this line of reasoning, we should go all the way and stop referring to ourselves as Christians. The truth is, we don't live in first-century Palestine, 16th-century Europe or an impoverished nation of the 21st century. Traditions are living, changing entities, and we have the responsibility of wrestling with how to live faithfully in our own context.

Instead of talking about whether or not we are really Anabaptists, we should be asking the question, What does it mean to be an Anabaptist Christian in an affluent, capitalist, democratic, pluralist society? Seeking to answer this question will root us in our tradition even as it propels us into the complexities of our own surroundings.—*Joel Miller, Elkhart, Ind.*

Walter Klaassen proposes some stringent standards for anyone wishing to call oneself Anabaptist. He suggests that "some Mennonites" in Vietnam, Columbia, Ethiopia (I would add Indonesia) who suffer for their faith deserve to be called Anabaptists. Why would the same logic not apply to the name Christian? We do not suffer as did the Christians before the Edict of Milan in 313 freed them from persecution. How can we affluent, nonsuffering North Americans presume to deserve the Christian label?

Klaassen suggests that we should be content with our old nickname, Mennonite. So it is OK for us to name ourselves after someone who lived with a price on his head and had to stay underground for the rest of his life after he joined the Anabaptists?—*Melvin D. Schmidt, Hyattsville, Md.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Two issues sparked numerous letters from our readers in the last three weeks: Walter Klaassen's May 2 article "Anabaptists and Mennonites" and a Reader's Say letter criticizing Goshen (Ind.) College interim president John Yordy for signing a global warming document entitled "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action." But there are important responses to other subjects, and we hope you will find those letters included in an additional Readers Say section on page 22. Elsewhere, our cover story from Keith Harder, member of the executive leadership staff for Mennonite Church USA, reflects on what his Father's Day will mean this year as he and his family remember the son lost 20 years ago in a drowning accident.—*Editor*

Walter Klaassen is correctly disturbed about the current use of the noun "Anabaptists" ("Anabaptists and Mennonites," May 2). To be sure, descendants of the 16th-century Anabaptists became a second-generation movement, qualitatively different in spirit, if not in substance, from that of the founders of the movement.

Klaassen sees himself as a lifelong "advocate for the Anabaptist form of Christian faith," and here he makes a valid distinction. We ought to use the adjectival form, "Anabaptist," to describe our intent in sizing up and carrying forth our faith (as Everett J. Thomas also correctly does at the end of his fine editorial, "Identity Crisis"). We, too, want to be lifelong advocates for the Anabaptist form of Christian faith, centering as it does in a living relationship to the Jesus of history (whom we follow) and the Christ of faith (the spirit and power within and among us as we gather as Christ's body and attempt to carry out his gospel of proclamation and reconciliation, of peace and justice). So our faith is Anabaptist, but we are no longer Anabaptists.—*Leonard Gross, Goshen, Ind.*

The Walter Klaassen and Ted Grimsrud articles in the May 2 issue of *The Mennonite* concerning being Anabaptist or Mennonite are appropriate for us North American Mennonites. We need this type of reminder because we are joining the prevailing lifestyle and culture at an alarming rate. Millions of poor in this world have difficulty finding their next meal; they may be the ones who can best see how our lifestyles in America are connected with violence. The money flow and availability to us has changed our priorities to the point that having faith is a nice thing, but to put it into the "Jesus disciple variety" in such a complex environment has taken its toll. To give up part of our lifestyles and learning to live without the support of the system must be priority number one for all of us. After all, we are not just to tell about the message; we are to be the message.—*Clarence Stutzman, Wooster, Ohio*

I must send a few words of appreciation for the May 2 issue, which is stimulating and challenging. I like these sentences in Everett Thomas' editorial: "Add that to scholars telling us we are not really Anabaptist, and what's left? Borscht, shoo-fly pie and a cappella singing?"

I truly hope there is more. And while Klaassen's challenge is difficult to accept, it is likely true to some degree: "There are, however, some Mennonites who may justifiably use the name Anabaptist. They live in Vietnam, Colombia, Ethiopia and other places in the world where they were and are being persecuted for their faith."

Not North America? This issue has certainly provided some real probing for our denominational faith. Thanks for this good issue. Keep up the good work.—*Luke Yoder, Pigeon, Mich.*

Global warming

I was disappointed to read the opinion expressed by Jon Kauffman in the May 2 Readers Say. It is mistaken to say that most credible scientists believe that global warming "may not be harmful" or that "many scientists are not greatly alarmed." Kauffman did not state what organizations or people his "quick search on the Internet" discovered. But I doubt if those sources represent the expert scientific community. I urge him to read what the following three widely respected organizations state with regard to human-induced climate change and its dangers to the health of the planet and of its human inhabitants of God's creation: Center for Atmospheric Research, National Climate Data Center, Union of Concerned Scientists. Kauffman will be reassured that these organizations are not composed of "politicians, journalists and academics" but of scientists who have researched these matters for their entire careers. It is good that Kauffman "prefers to listen to the scientists," and I urge him to begin now. —*David Rempel Smucker, Akron, Pa.*

I was mystified by Jon Kauffman's logic in expressing disappointment that Goshen (Ind.) College interim president John Yordy signed "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action." According to Kauffman, it is only politicians, journalists and academics who have something to gain by expressing alarm about global warming and are raising the alarm, and he prefers to listen to the scientists. I'm wondering how Kauffman distinguishes between a scientist and an academic. Or how he accounts for the fact that it is politicians who have denied global warming and who are currently in power in the United States. In my estimation, it is only scientists who have bona fide credentials as academics who are worth listening to. Despite Kauffman's assertions to the contrary, they are increasingly agreeing that global warming is a reality. John Yordy's doctorate in chemistry is good enough to qualify him as a scientist, and I thank him for having the courage to speak out on this critical issue.—*Larry Augsburger, Apple Creek, Ohio.*

From regular reading of the scientific literature, I see a different conclusion on the global warming issue from that reported by Jon Kauffman based on his "quick search on the Internet." While there is not complete agreement among scientists, the scientific community is moving toward an increasingly strong consensus regarding the science of global climate change: Scientific evidence indicates the world is undoubtedly warming.

In addition, there is a significant body of scientific research that attributes this warming largely to emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases resulting from human activities, including fossil fuel combustion and deforestation. Reputable scientists have also concluded that a number of negative effects are likely to occur as a result of global warming. Included in the list of impacts are sea-level rise resulting in the inundation of coastal areas, increased risk of droughts and floods, threats to biodiversity, and spread of disease. These negative impacts will not manifest themselves evenly around the globe but are likely to hit the poor the hardest. Thus, social justice issues, as well as our responsibilities as stewards of the earth, come into the picture when considering the prospect of global warming. I support Goshen College interim president John Yordy in joining the group calling for action to curb global warming.—*Robert B. Wenger, Green Bay, Wis.*

Readers Say continues on page 22.

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

With the high gas prices, my travel plans this summer (70 votes):

○ Have changed to travel less (31%)

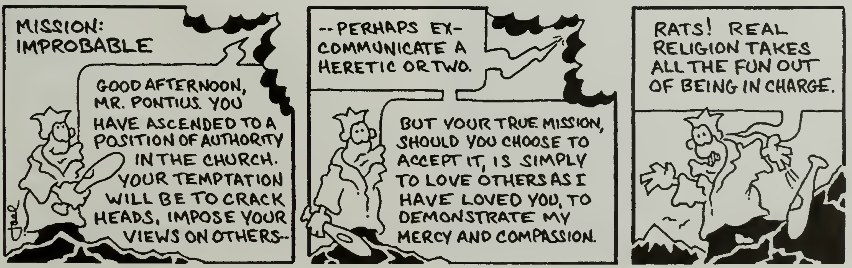
○ Have not changed (60%)

○ Not sure (9%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


MISSION: IMPROBABLE
GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. PONTIUS. YOU HAVE ASCENDED TO A POSITION OF AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH. YOUR TEMPTATION WILL BE TO CRACK HEADS, IMPOSE YOUR VIEWS ON OTHERS-
--PERHAPS EX-COMMUNICATE A HERETIC OR TWO.
BUT YOUR TRUE MISSION, SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT, IS SIMPLY TO LOVE OTHERS AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, TO DEMONSTRATE MY MERCY AND COMPASSION.
RATS! REAL RELIGION TAKES ALL THE FUN OUT OF BEING IN CHARGE.
Joel

IN BRIEF

CPT receives first Michael Sattler Peace Award

In its 50th year, the German Mennonite Peace Committee has founded the Michael Sattler Peace Award in memory of the Reformation-era Anabaptist. Christian Peacemaker Teams received the first award at a May 20 ceremony in the Evangelical Church in Rottenburg / Neckar. The award is supported by the Evangelical Church of Rottenburg, the Catholic Peace organization Pax Christi and the City of Rottenburg. Michael Sattler was burned at the stake on May 20, 1527, in Rottenburg, Germany, for his nonviolent Christian faith.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Record auction at Western Mennonite School

The 34th annual benefit auction at Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., raised $236,000, an increase of $108,000 over the previous record in 2005. More than 1,100 people attended on May 6. Proceeds will fund the Christian education program, the Student Grant Financial Assistance Program and Western's new Academic Center. An estimated $118,000 of this year's total was raised through matching gift projects, including a $50,000 one-day matching gift challenge.—*Western Mennonite School*

MCC and partners respond to earthquake

AKRON, Pa.—Within 36 hours of a powerful earthquake that shook the Indonesian island of Java May 27, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and its local partners, including the Muria Mennonite Synod (GKMI) of Indonesia, were distributing emergency food and supplies to survivors of the quake, which struck near the central Java city of Jogjakarta.

The earthquake killed more than 5,100 people, seriously injuring 6,500 and leaving 200,000 homeless, according to the Indonesian government. Java is the single most populated island in the world, with a population of more than 120 million.

On May 28, MCC staff and members of the GKMI church were already delivering two truckloads of emergency supplies to Pundong, a community of 50,000 people south of Jogjakarta and home to a GKMI congregation.

MCC provided nearly $2,700 to the Mennonite Diaconial Service for the purchase of emergency food items for displaced people in Pundong. The funds were used for truck transportation of supplies and material aid gathered by the Salatiga Mennonites. They also covered the cost to purchase a generator.

Another $10,000 has been made available to another MCC partner, YAKKUM Emergency Unit, for the purchase and distribution of medical supplies, painkillers and mobile orthopedic clinics.

All MCC workers in Indonesia are safe, according to Ed Martin, co-director of Asia programs, including a family from Alberta living in Jogjakarta.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

David Fisher Fast

Free at last

Pat Houmphan baptizes Nukhan Latsaboon on Easter Sunday. Houmphan and pastor Samarn Senavong baptized three members of Living Water Church in a lake near Borabu, Thailand. For years a dark, shadowy figure haunted Nukhan Latsaboon when she was asleep and when she was awake. The spirit chased and choked her until she could bear no more. But once she accepted Christ, she was at peace. At her baptism, she thanked Jesus for her deliverance.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

The Mennonite hires assistant editor

GOSHEN, Ind.—*The Mennonite* has hired Anna Groff as assistant editor, a new half-time position, beginning June 1. Groff, who graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College last month with a B.A. in communication, will be responsible to develop the digital side of the magazine's operations, including revamping the Web site. She will do research and development for online journalism products that will connect with young adults. The position is temporary (through San Jose 2007).

Anna Groff

Groff will remain in Goshen this summer, then relocate to Harrisonburg, Va., where she will also report on Mennonite Church USA activities in the East. Groff is from Lancaster, Pa., and is a member at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster.

The new position is possible partly because *The Mennonite* concluded its fiscal year ending Jan. 31 with $628,879 of income and expenses of $537,901, leaving combined net assets of $82,496 as of Jan. 31 (audited). "Income was up slightly," says editor Everett J. Thomas, "but our expenses were down significantly because we brought all our production in-house rather than purchasing services from Mennonite Publishing Network."

Thomas also expects expenses to be down this year, he says, "since printing costs at IPC Print Services will be about $50,000 less than they were with our previous printer."—*Gordon Houser*

Young adults bike: Bay City to Ocean City

HARLEYSVILLE, Pa.—Bikemovement is a group of young adults planning to ride bicycles across the United States this July and August for seven weeks to engage conversation about the church. "Our vision is to provide a responsive, relevant and bridge-building space for young adults to engage open conversation," says project coordinator David Landis of Harleysville.

The group will stop at Mennonite churches across the country. The journey begins at Bay City, Ore., and will stop at Kalona, Iowa; Elkhart, Ind.; Bluffton and Orrville, Ohio; Lancaster and Souderton, Pa.; as well as Portland, Ore.; Omaha, Neb.; Chicago and Philadelphia, ending at Ocean City, N.J.

The Global Youth Summit at Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in Zimbabwe 2003 was a platform for conversation within the diverse youth of the global Anabaptist church. Bikemovement's goal is to support emerging young leaders as they gath-

Melanie Zuercher

ring Service Day at Bethel draws 190 workers

ghan Reha, a junior at Bethel College in North Newton,
n., from Tiskilwa, Ill., mows the grass at the Harvey County
meless Shelter in Newton. Around 190 Bethel students, plus
arly 40 faculty and staff members, participated in the col-
ge's annual Spring Service Day April 5. Groups as small as
o and as large as the entire football team did yard cleanup,
inting, minor repairs and other work at locations in North
wton, Newton and Wichita.—*Bethel College*

er for broader conversation at the next summit in Paraguay 2009. Working with MWC, bikemovement participants hope to raise half the $100,000 goal, which will bring Anabaptist youth from the global south to the summit.

For more information, see bikemovement.org.

Mennonite Financial has best year

LANCASTER, Pa.—A new office in Sarasota, Fla., a new resource for teaching about money and stewardship and more than $20,000 contributed to church and mission work in 2005 were three developments 293 members of Mennonite Financial Credit Union learned about at their annual meeting at Bird-in-Hand, Pa., late in April. The largest annual members' meeting in the credit union's 50-year history reviewed a year that was also one of Mennonite Financial's best:

- assets of $72.5 million, a growth of 22 percent over the previous year;
- loans of $63 million, a 21 percent growth rate;
- 8,743 members, a 10 percent increase over 2004.

Mennonite Financial is chartered to serve Mennonites, Amish, Brethren in Christ and members of related Anabaptist groups in the United States. Its services include savings, certificates, money markets, HSAs, credit cards, debit/ATM cards, personal and vehicle loans, mortgages and services for small businesses.

The credit union also has offices in Lancaster, where it's headquartered; Ephrata, Pa.; Belleville, Pa.; Scottdale, Pa.; and Kidron, Ohio. Mennonite Financial members living in 46 states and 19 foreign countries also have access to all financial services online at www.mennonitefinancial.com. It has 40 staff members.—*Mennonite Financial*

Bluffton students explore ministry

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton University students Anna Roeschley, Natalie Grieser and Wade Slechter have been chosen to participate in this summer's Ministry Inquiry Program, which helps college students consider pastoral ministry by providing an opportunity to work under the supervision of a pastor and experience ministry firsthand.

Visitation, worship planning and leading, participating in congregational committees, teaching classes or leading groups, reading and reflection may all be part of the students' summer.

Roeschley, a junior from Graymont, Ill., will serve at Madison (Wis.) Mennonite Fellowship. Grieser, a junior from Archbold, Ohio, will serve at First Mennonite Church of Middlebury, Ind. Slechter will be serving at Ebenezer Mennonite Church in Bluffton, where he is a member.
—*Bluffton University*

Columbus Church supports B.R.E.A.D.

COLUMBUS, Ohio—On May 8, 75 people from Columbus Mennonite Church (15 under age 18) attended the annual Nehemiah Assembly of B.R.E.A.D. (Building Responsibility, Equality And Dignity) at Tifereth Israel Congregation, along with 1,500 other people of faith from 48 separate congregations, including United Methodist, Lutheran, Catholic, UUC, Mennonite, Episcopal, Apostolic, Christian Reformed, Congregational, AME and independent Christian churches.

The assembly presented proposals to city and county officials for finding solutions to health-clinic closings, an affordable housing trust fund, truancy and dropout in Columbus schools and early childhood learning. City officials agreed to proceed with recommendations.—*Jep Hostetler*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

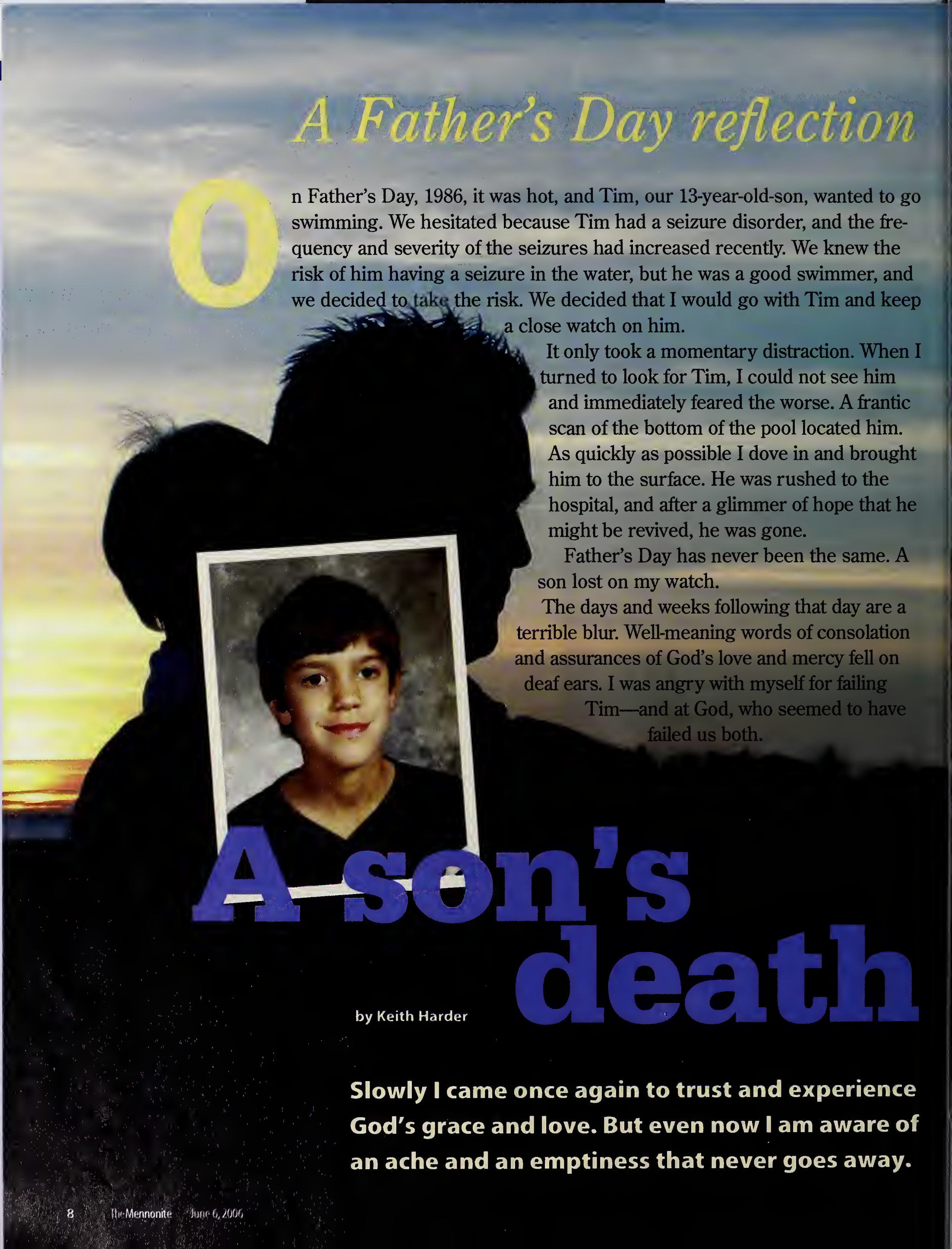
IN BRIEF

Jones named vice president at Goshen College

President-elect Jim Brenneman has announced the appointment of William A. Jones as vice president for institutional advancement at Goshen (Ind.) College. Jones will begin in early July, leaving his current post as director of the Berea Fund at Berea (Ky.) College. Jones was part of Berea's college and alumni relations leadership team. He oversaw a staff of 12 and managed an office that raised $4 million a year by working with donors, alumni and friends.—*Goshen College*

Plant a tree

A mature shade tree can save a homeowner $80 per year in energy costs, according to one estimate, reports the April 26 *Christian Science Monitor*. A homeowner in Washington, D.C., claimed that her energy costs jumped as much as $120 per month after city workers mistakenly cut down a 60-foot oak tree on the east side of her house. Forestry experts say that trees cool the air, reduce pollution and absorb storm water runoff—as well as add to property values.—*The Christian Century*



A Father's Day reflection

A son's death

by Keith Harder

Slowly I came once again to trust and experience God's grace and love. But even now I am aware of an ache and an emptiness that never goes away.

On Father's Day, 1986, it was hot, and Tim, our 13-year-old-son, wanted to go swimming. We hesitated because Tim had a seizure disorder, and the frequency and severity of the seizures had increased recently. We knew the risk of him having a seizure in the water, but he was a good swimmer, and we decided to take the risk. We decided that I would go with Tim and keep a close watch on him.

It only took a momentary distraction. When I turned to look for Tim, I could not see him and immediately feared the worse. A frantic scan of the bottom of the pool located him. As quickly as possible I dove in and brought him to the surface. He was rushed to the hospital, and after a glimmer of hope that he might be revived, he was gone.

Father's Day has never been the same. A son lost on my watch.

The days and weeks following that day are a terrible blur. Well-meaning words of consolation and assurances of God's love and mercy fell on deaf ears. I was angry with myself for failing Tim—and at God, who seemed to have failed us both.

In some mysterious sense, all the calamities that humans endure may be part of God's unfolding purposes.

During the days after Tim's death, friends and family stayed close and surrounded us with their love. Slowly I came once again to trust and experience God's grace and love. But even now I am aware of an ache and an emptiness that never goes away.

At the memorial service for Tim, the person we asked to preach began his message with: "Keith and Judy, God loves you." That was hard to accept or believe at that moment. But this assurance stayed with me. In retrospect it is clear that God's love was surrounding us during those days, even when we could not recognize or receive it.

Several months after Tim's death, his older brother was baptized by immersion. Before the baptism, these familiar words from Romans 6 were read: "Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."

As Scott went under the water, I thought of Tim. At that moment, it came to me that his drowning was a kind of baptism, renewing my hope that he would be raised to newness of life through the resurrection of Jesus. Death, denied the last word, began to lose its sting.

These past 20 years have been a journey of healing and coming to grips with what took place that day. The question Why did this happen? is less intense but still present and still a mystery.

I have struggled with the idea that "God is in control" in light of Tim's drowning. Was God somehow responsible for what happened? Was this God's will for Tim and for our family? It seems contrary to the nature of God revealed in the Bible to attribute all of our losses and tragedies to God. If God is with us in our grief as our comforter, it's hard to think that God is also the cause of our grief.

A cruel net: It has been more helpful to think that Tim was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The sentiment in Ecclesiastes 9 is strangely comforting: "No one can anticipate the time of disaster. Like a fish taken in a cruel net, and like birds caught in a snare, so mortals are snared at a time of calamity when it suddenly falls upon them." Abetted by my lack of attention, Tim was inadvertently caught in a cruel net.

In some mysterious sense, all the calamities that humans endure may be part of God's unfolding purposes. It seems clearer now that God was with us in our suffering and grief. God has used this experience to teach me about my limits, grief, forgiveness and hope, but this is different from making God responsible for this tragedy.

On this Father's Day we will again remember what happened 20 years ago. We will grieve that Tim is not with us and we will gratefully remember him with stories, laughter and tears. We will remember his love for baseball and table games. We will remember his saying with a twinkle in his eye that he would marry a girl who also had seizures and how they would both have seizures at the same time when they would say, "I do." We will remember the awful unpredictability of the seizures and their lingering aftermath. And we will wonder what he would be like if he were still alive.

It's important for us to remember who Tim was and that he is still part of our family. We will visit his grave with its rough, hewn limestone marker. We will cherish our other three children and grandson and remember how our family has been sustained by God's grace and mercy. What happened 20 years ago forever marked and changed us, for better and for worse.

Surrounded: On this Father's Day, in the midst of picnics, reunions and good times, others, too, will grieve the loss of fathers and children. Some will grieve broken relationships and separations. There are those who will grieve the loss of whole families. Our loss was grievous enough; it's hard to imagine losing my whole family or going through this experience alone. We will remember Tim's memorial service and recall how we were so graciously surrounded by family and friends but also think about those who because of war or famine do not even have the chance to care for their children in death and who have no graveyard where they are able to remember and grieve.

May we always cherish our memories of parents and children—living and dead—and connect with those whom we love and cherish. May we often tell our children and parents how much they mean to us. May we be reconciled with those in our families from whom we are estranged and be renewed in relationships that have grown distant. May we experience the mystery of God's ways with us humans and God's comfort and love in times of failure and loss. May the wondrous mysteries of life, death and resurrection graciously inform how we live.

Keith Harder is director of Congregational and Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

Do we have to choose between doctrine and

by Karl Landis

In John 17, Jesus prays that his followers will be "brought to complete unity" so that the world will know he was sent by God and that God's love will be evident among us. Some Christians have made the unity of the body of Christ their highest value and see separation over doctrinal disputes as an affront to the gospel.

In John 16, Jesus emphasizes the importance of sound doctrine and tells his followers that the [Holy] Spirit of truth will guide them "into all truth." 2 John warns us to refuse hospitality to "believers" who do not continue in the teaching of Christ lest we find ourselves deceived and sharing in the spread of deception. Some Christians have made sound biblical doctrine their highest value and see efforts to maintain unity in the face of doctrinal differences as compromising the truth.

Some teachings are more important than other teachings.

NTHIANS 15:8

erefore, my brothers, be
phesy, o and do not forbid
tongues. 40But everything s
done in a fitting and orderly p

e Resurrection of Christ

15 Now, brothers, I want
remind you of the gospel
preached to you, r which you receiv
and on which you have taken yo
stand. 2By this gospel you are saved, s
you hold firmly t to the word
preached to you. Otherwise, you have
believed in vain.
3For what I received u I passed on to
you v as of first

unity?

Four levels of doctrine help us get along.

An intriguing phrase of Paul's in 1 Corinthians 15 may point to a solution that cherishes both sound doctrine and unity in the body of Christ. He writes, "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance," In other words, some teachings are more important than other teachings. This is not to say other doctrines are unimportant, only that they should not be confused with "first importance" doctrine. For example, is not the promise of Jesus' second coming much clearer and more important than exactly how it will unfold?

David Miller, a Southern Baptist pastor in Iowa, offers a helpful, four-level framework for thinking about these matters. Miller's framework assumes that the person we disagree with claims to be a Christian teaching sound biblical doctrine. His basic premise is that we should be firmly united with other Christians on the core doctrines of the Christian faith, then extend charity to each other in other areas.

Level 1: Brick wall doctrine

The first level of doctrine includes the doctrines that are "of first importance" and for which we must contend (Jude 3) because they constitute a brick wall that defines the boundary that encompasses all orthodox, biblical Christians. Christians who deny these doctrines have denied the faith and are not the proper focus of efforts at unity (2 John). Unbelievers live outside this brick wall, too, so we do not seek to be united with them as though they were believers, though Jesus calls us to engage unbelievers in relationship, serve them and proclaim the good news to them.

Level 1 doctrines include at least the authority of the Scriptures and Paul's list in 1 Corinthians 15—"that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve." Level 1 doctrines are essential to a biblical understanding of God's nature and of the reconciliation with God and with our neighbors that is offered through Jesus Christ.

Level 2: Picket fence doctrine

The second level of doctrine includes important doctrines about which sincere believers disagree. As defining doctrines for particular denominations, they define boundaries within the larger arena of biblical Christian faith. These doctrines can be seen as picket fences because they constitute friendly boundaries that separate neighbors who trust and respect each other. When we disagree at this level, we should remember that we agree with each other on the core doctrines of the Christian faith (level 1 doctrines). As a result, we need to recognize and honor each other as fellow believers even though we may each be firmly convinced about our unique picket fence doctrines regarding, for example, how worship is conducted, how Communion is celebrated or how baptism is administered.

Miller gives the example of a nearby church of another denomination, one with which his church would have little level 2 agreement. They wanted to baptize some new Christians but had no baptistry. Miller welcomed them to use the baptistry in his church. He writes, "Neither of us compromised our doctrine, but we opened the gate in our picket fence and had the neighbors over for a visit."

These doctrines can be seen as picket fences because they constitute friendly boundaries that separate neighbors who trust and respect each other.

Picket fences allow us to live out our convictions without having to fight over every issue. We get into trouble when we confuse level 2 (denominational) differences with brick walls that define the boundaries of acceptable Christian faith. We may well try to convince our neighbors of the merits of our positions, but when the discussion is over and they remain unconvinced, we should be able to respect their commitment to Christ and to the Scriptures and return to our own homes to worship with those who believe as we do.

Level 3: Family discussion doctrine

Even when you live in the same house, you may disagree with other members of your family about some things. These disagreements should not call into question your unity as a family. For example, you should not consider splitting your family

Continued on page 12

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because you disagree about how Christ's second return will unfold, who wrote the book of Hebrews or whether Galatians was written to a northern or southern church. These differences do not even warrant the separation of a picket fence. We can discuss or debate them within our denominations without suggesting that our opponents need to find a new denominational home (Level 2 disagreement) or that one of us is a heretic (Level 1 disagreement). We live behind the same brick wall and within the same picket fence, yet some disagreements remain.

Our congregations ideally will be healthy communities of discernment that enable us to study the Scriptures, wrestle with its mysteries and discern the Holy Spirit's leading together.

Level 4: Private conviction doctrine

We hold some doctrines as private convictions about disputable matters. These are matters about which we make wise decisions and permit other Christians to do the same. We might urge them to think about their decisions, but we should respect their freedom to make their own decisions in these matters. In Paul's day, disputable matters included eating meat offered to idols (1 Corinthians 8), honoring certain days as sacred (Romans 14) and eating food formerly considered unclean (Romans 14). In our day, they include drinking a glass of wine, watching movies and home schooling. We should be willing to limit our freedom to be a blessing rather than a hindrance to others (see Romans 14). We should not allow any of our wisdom decisions to undermine our unity with people who share our convictions about brick wall, picket fence and family discussion doctrines.

Final considerations

If it is true that doctrines vary in importance, then we have work to do.

• First, each of us should be firmly convinced in our own minds about assigning each doctrine to its proper level (Romans 14). Our congregations ideally will be healthy communities of discernment that enable us to study the Scriptures together, wrestle with its mysteries together and discern the Holy Spirit's leading together, asking, Is this doctrine essential to a biblical understanding of God's nature? Is this doctrine essential to the reconciliation with God and our neighbors that is offered through Jesus Christ?

If yes, then we should treat that doctrine as a brick wall. It is of first importance.

If no, then we should ask, Does this doctrine impact the functioning of our congregation or our denomination?

If yes, then treat that doctrine as a picket fence that separates friends who happen to live in different denominational homes.

If no, then this doctrine does not affect our understanding of who God is, how to be reconciled to God, how to be reconciled to our neighbors or how to work with other believers, and we need no fence at all.

• Second, great damage has been done to the doctrinal purity of the church when core doctrines have been treated like unimportant doctrines. Compromising core doctrines for the sake of the unity of the church endangers the very nature of the church. We introduce heresy and apostasy if we treat core doctrines like disputable matters or matters of personal conscience.

• Third, great damage has been done to the unity of the church and to individual spiritual vitality when lower-level doctrines have been treated like core doctrines. Insisting on broad conformity to private convictions fractures the body of Christ over disputable matters.

Many of us in the Mennonite church are still recovering from this second sort of damage, especially those who lived through the period when people were disciplined or excommunicated from our churches because they owned TVs, bought insurance, wore the wrong clothes or drove the wrong vehicles.

My hope is that as we work through the recovery process we can avoid the temptation to embrace the opposite error, to treat core doctrines as disputable matters. Some of us are struggling with this temptation for the sake of the unity of the denomination.

May God grant us the wisdom and the courage to cherish both sound doctrine and Christian unity.

Karl Landis is director of leadership development for Lancaster Mennonite Conference and attends New Life Fellowship in Ephrata, Pa.

To my father, the captain

by Glenna Holloway

Offshore, the Sunday yachts rocked
on bright ripples. There was one-
farthest out, tall-masted, pointing to heaven
like an angel's benediction, or maybe
St. Elmo's gnomon marking the horizon.
And I thought of you, Dad.

Later, the sky grew sullen. Small boats
aimed their bows homeward, sails straining.
Wise, I thought, watching a quick squall build
northeast, wondering why the admired craft
was not beating canvas for the harbor.

Then I saw the tiny catboats yawing
with inexperience. Like a shepherd,
the deep water sailor herded them, big wings
outstretched. My metaphoric angel, true to form,
was last to dock just as the storm broke.

I smiled at the heroship. All evening
my thoughts were yours, my father. However distant
you are, or how many jibs wave and beckon nearby,
still it's your sure shining I look to, your course,
your unwavering wake I'll follow.

Glenna Holloway lives in Naperville, Ill.

iStockphoto

Practice God’s

Learning to cling to God

Honestly, I didn’t mean for it to become a “spiritual” experience. I needed to vary my aerobic workout routine, so I began an arm-swinging, high-speed walk in our housing tract. But my teenage daughter was embarrassed to have Mom turning nearby corners in workout shorts, so I took to a lonely canyon road, cluttered with garbage and swathes of mud.

Perhaps because practicing the presence of God has been my favorite spiritual discipline, God showed up in everything around me. The tumbleweeds nested at the edge of the road represented the stumbling blocks of my life—annoyances with those I loved, reluctance to do difficult things, yearnings for a problem-free life. So I scooped up those tumbleweeds and hurled them off the cliff-like side of the road into the creek below.

Over the years, the mountains in the distance have become massive symbols of God’s presence. I’ve named the peaks for Bible phrases or life lessons God has taught me. During a painful church split, the sharply pointed peak became “Don’t forget to love” (the point of the gospel). I’ve never thought hard about these truths because I’ve been too busy panting, chugging water and heading into the wind. I’ve simply gazed as I’ve walked, and days later I’ve found myself loving those I’ve disagreed with.

Because I often listen to worship songs as I walk, my sense of God’s majesty is expanding. During certain songs—please don’t laugh—I do a few twirls in the road, watching out for gravel trucks. Also while practicing God’s presence, God reminds me of folks to love and people to pay more attention to. As a result, my service to Christ has become more a part of who I am rather than special moments of being Super Christian.

The walk doesn’t look like prayer, but it is. God engages me in conversation, giving me creative methods for dealing with my teenagers, new ideas for my work and just the right words to say to my discouraged husband or friends. Because my particular job causes me to live in my head all day, I need this walk to force me out of my head into a rugged physical effort that clears my circuits. Freed from my own clever ideas and agenda, I can more easily hear God’s unexpectedly practical ideas.

presence ... while you walk

by Jan Johnson

Many times, especially in the earliest years of this walking regimen, the committee that lives in my head took over for minutes at a time. My committee member, Ms. Anger, focused on someone I was mad at and what I'd tell him or her if I ever got the chance. Then I'd feel guilty that I'd stolen time from my God-filled reverie. One particular day, I stopped, stomped my foot in disgust and crossed my arms. I demanded that God jettison these negative thoughts from my mind.

If you've ever put God on the spot this way, you know what happened. Nothing. A boulder didn't fall from the nearby cliff. A lizard with a sign on his back didn't cross the road in front of me. As I shuffled along, I wanted to kick myself. I looked up at the cliff beside me and thought of my son, who taught rappelling. He could have shimmied up and down that cliff with skill. But I would have been stuck on a ledge somewhere, clinging for life and breath. The word "clinging" changed everything. As I heard myself think that word, I thought of the phrase "My soul clings to you" (Psalm 63:8).

Suddenly the point of my canyon road walks (the aim of my life, even) became clear—to cling to God. Striving to do a spiritual discipline perfectly or even to live life perfectly was about me. I needed only to cling to God with everything I had. As I connected with God through disciplines such as Bible study, prayer and service, God would change me. I invented my own little saying, "As I do the connecting, God does the perfecting."

Armed with this graced insight from God, I've learned to usher the committee members (Ms. Victim, Ms. Rescuer, Ms. Perfect Christian) to the door of my mind gently whenever they appear. Getting frustrated with them doesn't help—it just makes me forget God.

Finding God in the mundane seems like it should happen on a sunny afternoon while watching geese swim in an idyllic pond. Sometimes it does, but I've had to remind myself that God often shows up in unexpected, gritty situations when you're feeling edgy and sweaty.

Others have verified this by telling me about their close-to-the-bone conversations with God while mowing the lawn, shooting hoops or constructing a compost heap. Why does it surprise us that God's presence becomes obvious in such vigorous and tactile situations?

If you're a shepherd, God might show up in a bush that burns too long. If you're a hardworking, water-toting Palestinian woman, God might show up as a thirsty out-of-towner at your well. If you're a swindler and manipulator, God might show up as a wrestler who makes sure your hip socket is never the same. The lives of Moses, the Samaritan woman and Jacob demonstrate to me how God shows up in mundane moments and unexpected places and that God wants me to respond.

God shows up in mundane moments and unexpected places and wants me to respond.

Moses had to ponder the bush and walk over to it. The Samaritan woman had to keep herself from smarting off to the Jew who didn't belong in her neighborhood but requested her help anyway. Jacob, desperately stuck between a rock (Laban) and a hard-hearted brother (Esau), waiting in the night at the River Jabbok, had to wrestle his way into blessing. God wants me to respond by participating in conversation with him.

Staying alert this way makes life much more exciting. I keep my eyes open for this incognito constant companion, anticipating his next move, looking for his invisible kingdom. God's companionship becomes the most pervasive thing in life.

Jan Johnson is the author of Enjoying the Presence of God *and* When the Soul Listens. *www.janjohnson.org*

6 in a series of six

Holistic Stewardship

The search for 'happily ever after'

by Roy E. Bronkema

The stewardship of money

Money. Just saying the word brings joy or fear to the average household. It is a subject likely to invoke strong feelings in nearly everyone. These statistics illustrate some of its hold on America.

Average credit card debt per U.S. household: $7,200. Average interest rate charged by card issuers: 18 percent. If you pay only 2 percent of the U.S. average balance each month, it will take more than 52 years to settle up and cost $20,531 in interest.

There are a record number of U.S. bankruptcies today (1.6 million in 2004). In 2002, there were more bankruptcies than during the entire decade of the 1960s.

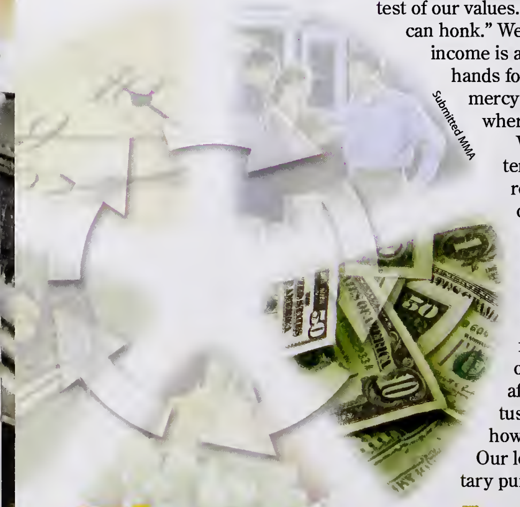
Financial problems are the largest contributing cause of marital stress and divorce.

Americans today spend more on legalized gambling than on groceries.

It is clear we need a biblical perspective on money today. People, many of them in our churches, are desperate to get control of their finances. Perhaps because of such overwhelming debt, tithing is at an all-time low in the United States, even less than it was during the Great Depression. According to a recent Mennonite Church USA survey, 31 percent of respondents give approximately 10 percent of their household gross income to charity or ministry. And it's important to note that 34 percent of all survey respondents said that less than half their total giving is tithed to any ministry of the Mennonite Church; the rest goes to outside charitable organizations.

How can we steward our money to bring maximum glory to God, provide for our families and reflect a heart of love and generosity? How do we learn to worship God financially? Here are some helpful considerations.

First, we can choose to be generous in life, not merely collectors. Money is the acid test of our values. The bumper sticker says it well: "Tithe if you love Jesus—anyone can honk." We can say that we love God, but what we do with our discretionary income is a truer reflection of what we value. We watch money sift through our hands for purchase after purchase, often without realizing we are not at the mercy of our wants. Money may seem to slip away, but we make choices where much of it slips.


Submitted MMA

We should try to adopt a scriptural value system, which will be countercultural to our "shop till you drop" society. Either we will honor God regularly, sacrificially and cheerfully with the first part of our income or our wants win our money by default. Either we love God above all else, or we will love ourselves. Making this choice gives you freedom to worship God wholeheartedly—eliminating competition from a worldly value system.

Once God is clearly our first love over money, it makes a dramatic difference in every other stewardship area. If we are trusting God financially, then it will affect our health—we will look to God to meet our needs rather than to our earning power to safeguard us. It will affect our relationships—we don't have to overspend to prove our status or importance or make better impressions on others. It changes how we spend our time—we begin to pursue godliness rather than gain. Our love of God will prompt us to use our talents in more than just monetary pursuits; we will look for ways to use them to eternal benefit.

Many people desire to make a positive difference with their finances. The recent generous giving to Hurricane Katrina victims proves that. However, a recent Mennonite Church USA study found that people motivated to give in response to natural disasters and catastrophic events are much less likely to consistently give through tithing or other charitable giving. We need to learn to build on that latent desire—realizing that sacrificial giving does more than change the world for the better. It changes us for the better. It transforms us into change-agents, not merely resource-users. We become most like God when we give—after all, "God so loved that he gave his Son."

A second crucial financial consideration is whether we have determined to live within our means. The average young married couple with children spends around 8 percent more than they make each year. Americans have learned to collect and consume rather than invest in eternity. Millions get caught in the race to accumulate.

A well-known financial advisor often shares a story in his seminars about a young mother who was putting her 4-year-old to bed one evening by reading the parable of the prodigal son. They talked about how the son had taken his inheritance and left home, living it up until he was left with nothing. When he finally found himself eating the slop of the pigs, he determined to find his way back home. After reading about the joyful reunion at the end of the story, the mother asked her daughter what she had learned. After thinking a moment, the child replied, "Never leave home without your credit card."

Sadly, many of us have slowly, maybe unconsciously, slipped into that same "spend what you don't have" mentality. But Proverbs makes it clear this perspective is unwise: "Precious treasure remains in the house of the wise, but the fool devours it" (Proverbs 21:20). We can learn to live on less—perhaps deciding to wear clothes until they wear out, drive used cars and not push ourselves to the credit limit in order to have the best homes, the most cell phone minutes and the hottest new gadgets. Making this choice gives you freedom in your budget to honor God with giving because you are living within your means.

Finally, we need to gain the perspective that we are not owners but stewards. God grants us many good things during our sojourn on this planet. We are clearly not the originators but managers. Have you ever walked into a parking lot, got into the car, turned the key, then realized, This key doesn't work. This is not my car. I am in the wrong car by mistake? In the same way, we fool ourselves into believing that our lives and possessions are ours, but they are not. They belong to God; we just manage them.

By remembering we are God's caretakers, we consult God on where to invest his money in causes that reflect our faith values. Tithing (and going beyond that to faith giving) is transformed from an obligatory duty to a joyful adventure—Let's see what God is going to do now with his resources through us. Making this choice gives you freedom to make eternal investments, laying up "treasure in heaven."

Brian Kluth, well-known speaker and author on financial issues, shares the following story. "Katie Fisher, 17, entered the Madison County Ohio Junior Livestock Sale hoping the lamb she had for sale would get a good price. For months Katie had been battling cancer. She had endured hospital stays and been through chemotherapy a number of times. Before the lamb went on the block, the auctioneer told the audience about Katie's condition, hoping this introduction would push the price-per-pound above the average of $2. It did—and then some. The lamb sold for $11.50 per pound. Then the buyer gave it back, and suggested the auctioneer sell it again. That started a chain reaction. Families bought it and gave it back; businesses bought it and gave it back. Katie's mother said, 'The first sale is the only one I remember. After that, I was crying too hard.' They ended up selling the lamb 36 times that day, raising more than $16,000 in the process."

Money is the acid test of our values.

When we give, we, too, set off a chain reaction of eternal benefit. We enable others to catch the joy of selfless living, prove our hearts of love for Jesus and become part of effective ministry to others. What a blessed life it is to catch the spirit of selflessness and feel the joy of "happily-ever-after" giving.

Roy E. Bronkema is a free-lance writer specializing in work for churches and Christian organizations. Roy and Nancy, his wife, reside in Niles, Mich.

MMA educational resources available at http://bookstore.mma-online.org

Money Mania: Mastering the Allure of Excess by Mark L. Vincent (Herald Press, 2004)

A Christian View of Money: Celebrating God's Generosity by Mark L. Vincent (Herald Press, 1999)

FirstFruits Living by Lynn Miller (Herald Press, 1999)

Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to Be Your Child's ATM by Nathan Dungen (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003)

The Power of Enough: Finding Contentment by Putting Stuff in its Place by Lynn Miller (Evangel Press, 2003)

The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Secrets of Joyful Giving by Randy Alcorn (Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 2001)

Are we antiwar enough?

Joy Kauffman is helping form a global nonviolence movement through an initiative called Freedom from Fear. For information go to www.eucharism.org.

My brother's friend Yawo has the most disarming smile. And his antiwar credentials are impressive. For years Yawo was a nonviolent student activist in his country of Togo. After fleeing Togo as a political refugee Yawo is still a student activist—but now he is majoring in peace and conflict studies in California.

With his prior commitment to nonviolence, it is unsettling to hear that Yawo and fellow refugees from the nonviolent struggle in Togo now want to know who will sell them tanks for invasion of their own country. Yawo says, "As far as I can tell, our nonviolent struggle has come to nothing except the murder of many of my friends and the exile of many others. If the global church wants to try nonviolent methods to help bring release to the captives of Togo, they need to act soon."

Tyranny is an often invisible civil war by which a government wages a war of violence and fear against citizens. In Togo and around the world, governments who oppress their citizens are the primary human source of injustice. Democratic governments often collude with tyrannies by doing the political bidding of unjust corporations that cater to uncaring global consumers. As a result, over 2 billion people—the poorest of the poor—are impoverished economically and politically by this global system that leaves them voiceless victims of policies leading to international wars, famine, refugees, poverty, environmental degradation, corruption, genocide and terrorism.

In this context, what does it mean to be antiwar? Can pacifists be passive in the face of the often subtle civil war of tyranny? Is there an incarnational way the global church can express solidarity with the poorest of the poor and illustrate our faith in the God-given dignity of all people? Or is it acceptable for us to pass by those beaten by the side of the road if crossing that road requires illegally crossing the border of a totalitarian state?

Mennonites rightly celebrate our good work all over the world. But if we were truly antiwar, wouldn't some of us risk our freedom by going to Togo to directly invite the "Christian" dictator Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe to end his war against Togo's citizens? Prior to the recent war, Mennonites and other Christian Peacemaker Teams members in Iraq spoke out against the Western plans for war but did not call for a peaceful end to Saddam's decades-long war on Iraqi citizens. Should not antiwar activists risk persecution to nonviolently call for the end to tyrannical civil wars? If Saddam had acted on the invitation to transform his power into a source for Iraqi civil rights, it would have ended Saddam's war on Iraqi citizens and averted the Western invasion. Would not efforts to end one oppressive war and avert the other be wonderful antiwar activism?

Being antiwar further leads to being actively anti-tyranny upon recognition that international wars are diminished when governments are accountable to their citizens. Full democracies hardly ever go to war with each other. To be antiwar we must show the nonviolent Jesus, intervene to end tyrannical civil wars in places like Togo, have a commitment to basic civil rights for all and seek to decrease the likelihood that unaccountable governments will engage in war.

The time has come for antiwar Christians to seek the abolition of tyranny and the resource exploitation and civil and international violence that comes with it. Although the last 100 years have been bloody with war, they have also seen countless peaceful transformations from tyranny to civil rights in the southern United States, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, Zambia, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Lebanon, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, the Philippines and others. Nonviolent actions by Christians can ensure that rule of one's country by terror or profiting from tyranny will soon be as contemptible as individual slavery, colonialism and Soviet domination have become. The time has come for a global antiwar movement to "proclaim freedom for the captives … and to liberate the oppressed," even when those captive and oppressed are held by their own governments.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "In our next campaign we have to institutionalize nonviolence and take it international." I would have more confidence that Yawo and his friends need not resort to the tanks if King were alive and mobilizing a global nonviolence movement. Yet the same Spirit that lived in him lives in us. For God's sake and our own, let that Spirit blow in and through us. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Family treasures**—Freeman Miller
- **My grandma's quilt**—Roberta Albrecht

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Historical library celebrates 100 years

College alumni started first Mennonite historical library in North America.

Jodi H. Beyeler

Far left: In a photo from around 1950, Mennonite Historical Library curator Nelson Springer (left) and director H. S. Bender (right) stand with two of the books in the library's collection: a 1524/1529 Froschauer Bible and an 18th-century Luther translation of the Bible. Much of the early collecting for the library was done by Bender, and Springer spent 37 years bringing order and accessibility to it.

Left: Mennonite Historical Library curator Joe Springer (left) and director John D. Roth (right) offer leadership for the library a century after its beginnings. They are standing with a 1524/1529 Froschauer Bible and a 1748 Ephrata *Martyrs' Mirror*. With a collection that began on a single shelf, the MHL has expanded its catalog of publications and items relevant to Mennonite-Anabaptist life and thought over the past century to hold nearly 65,000 volumes.

In its nearly 65,000-volume collection, the Mennonite Historical Library (MHL) couldn't claim an issue of *Glamour* magazine before this year. But when John A. Lapp opened his public lecture at the May 5-6 centennial celebration conference of the MHL, "Future Directions in Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholarship," he contributed a unique piece of Mennonitica to the library's collection: an issue of the women's fashion magazine which featured Mennonite and Spelman College student body president Sarah Thompson (see News Digest, Oct. 4, 2005). Lapp paid $75 for it at a Mennonite Central Committee auction, and Thompson autographed it for the MHL.

The contribution was quite different from those that would have been made at the start of the unique collection. In June 1906, just three years after the Elkhart (Ind.) Institute moved to a wheat field at the south end of Goshen, Ind., and became Goshen College, the newly established Goshen College Alumni Association passed a resolution to create a collection in the college library devoted to Anabaptist-Mennonite history. Thus began the MHL, which took up residence on a few shelves of the college library.

Much has changed in Anabaptist-Mennonite studies in the last 100 years.

"Just to highlight some of these comparisons," said Lapp, "demonstrates the enormous task of comprehending the flourishing of Mennonite studies."

Lapp first drew contrasts in describing the growth of Mennonite studies. In 1906, when Goshen College made the commitment to create the first Mennonite historical library in North America, there were only two North American Mennonites with graduate-level education who had done academic research and writing in Mennonite history: C.H. Wedel and C. Henry Smith.

In 2006, nearly all Mennonite colleges and seminaries have on their faculty a scholar trained in Anabaptist and Mennonite history. As well, there are no less than 90 centers for collecting, studying and promoting Mennonite and Anabaptist studies in the United States and Canada, in addition to colleges and seminaries. And the growing impact of electronic media may be one of the biggest changes in the past 100 years.

MHL curator Joe Springer agreed with Lapp's assessment of the library's past and future roles. "We need to learn better how to track and acquire publications produced by Mennonite populations outside Europe and North America," Springer said. "Our relevance will fade if we fail to … pursue the coming explosion in materials written first in non-European, non-North American settings."

The two-day conference brought together more than 100 students, historians and Mennonite history enthusiasts. In addition to Lapp, other presenters included Gerald Biesecker-Mast, associate professor of communication at Bluffton (Ohio) University; Theron Schlabach, professor emeritus of history at Goshen College; Gayle Gerber Koontz, professor of theology and ethics at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.; and Ervin Beck, professor emeritus of English at Goshen College.—*Jodi H. Beyeler of Goshen College*

611 graduates in May commencements

Buffton University, Hesston College, AMBS and Bethel College ceremonies

Bluffton University
May 5
326 graduates

Beautiful spring weather welcomed the second graduating class of Bluffton (Ohio) University during the school's 106th annual commencement as well as the 96-year-old tradition of dancing around the Maypole. Salzman Stadium was overflowing with a crowd of more than 3,300 family and friends during the commencement ceremony. A record-breaking 326 students received their diplomas, with 35 students becoming the first graduates of Bluffton University's master's in business administration program.

Lee Snyder, president of Bluffton University, gave the commencement address. Snyder spoke of the realities of the world graduates are entering—one of war and scandals—and challenged them to "not give way to these horrors and fears, but rather to ask how might they live lives of truth, goodness and beauty." She prompted graduates to "take courage from Christ's example and from his personal call to be his hands, his feet and his heart in a world of almost indescribable need."

Snyder was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters degree by Morris Stutzman, chairman of Bluffton's board of trustees.—*Jill Duling of Bluffton University*

> **One of the finest things you can do with your life is to commit to serving others.**
> **—Galyn Vesey**

Courtesy photo

Bluffton (Ohio) University graduate Lindsay Miller takes part in the May Day ceremony. The school's traditional Maypole ceremony symbolizes the weaving together of Bluffton's past, present and future.

Vada Snider

Kristen Abrahams, Newton, Kan., signs the Graduation Pledge of Social and Environmental Responsibility as Alma McReynolds, Wichita, Kan., looks on. Aziza Hasan, 2003 Bethel graduate, holds the pledge.

Hesston College
May 7
159 graduates

Hesston (Kan.) College graduates laughed, wiped a tear or two and were invited to carry out God's will in their future as they listened to addresses at their commencement exercises on May 8 in Yost Center. Student speakers Eric Schmucker of Sacramento, Calif., and Kim Troyer of Shipshewana, Ind., shared a "Top 14" list of things they'd learned at Hesston College, including "Mennonite dances usually fail … or at least they should." The speech turned serious as Schmucker acknowledged the pain of creating relationships that will only last for two years.

"I have realized this," Smucker said, "it is not completely about whether we will see each other again, but how we have changed from knowing each other. Each person leaves their fingerprint on our existence, and it is these relationships that shape us."

John D. Yordy, interim president and provost at Goshen (Ind.) College, gave the commencement address on "Finding Our Way to the Future." Yordy drew lessons from the story of Jonah.

"Jonah helps us find our way to the future," Yordy said, "when we recognize that, like Jonah, we are never deserted by God, that we always have the possibility of turning toward God and experiencing God's presence and love."

This year, Hesston College graduated 159 students from 23 states and eight countries (including the United States). Seventy-three of the graduates are from Kansas, due largely to the 45 graduates in the nursing program.—*Phil Richard of Hesston College*

Larry Bartel

Aaron Miller, Milford, Neb., receives his diploma from Hesston College President Howard Keim.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

May 19

25 graduates

"Your ability to communicate—speaking and listening—will determine your gift of healing," a medical doctor told the graduates of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in the commencement address on May 19, at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. Joseph B. Martin, dean of the Harvard University medical school, compared his role with that of seminary graduates.

"We are the principle professions—physician and pastor or counselor—where the patient or church member expects to discover trust and compassion and where they can be assured of confidentiality," Martin said. Martin then enumerated five measurements of effective leadership: intelligence, emotional, humor or happiness, judgment and generosity quotients.

Sixteen graduates received the Master of Divinity degree, completing a three-year program of study that prepares people for congregational ministry.

Six people received Master of Arts degrees for two-year programs of study: one in peace studies; three in theological studies and two in Christian formation.

Three people received the Certificate in Theological Studies, a one-year, non-degree program. Four graduates are Canadians, and four represent countries outside of North America: Ethiopia, India, Kenya and Korea.

AMBS is a seminary of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, preparing pastors and other leaders for the church. AMBS also is approved for the training of pastors for the United Methodist Church.—*Mary E. Klassen of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

Bethel College

May 21

101 graduates

Bethel College graduates are among the elite. That was according to the speaker for Bethel College's 113th commencement, retired professor and sociologist Galyn Vesey of Wichita. Bethel College is located in North Newton, Kan.

"That doesn't make you better than anyone else," he told the 101 graduates, their families and friends gathered in Memorial Hall on May 21. "It just means you have a special advantage, and a responsibility to those less intellectually and economically advantaged. … One of the finest things you can do with your life is to commit to serving others."

Later, when introducing the class of 2006, interim vice president for academic affairs Brad Born noted that at least five seniors were "honoring a long-standing Bethel tradition" by planning to go into voluntary service soon after graduation.

While Vesey emphasized graduates' call to serve, earlier in the day the three senior speakers at the Baccalaureate service referred to the importance of community in their Bethel experience. Joel Hesed, an English major from Albert, Kan., called Bethel "a college committed to community, no matter how much it hurts." Dawn Lindsay-Benson, a social work major from Newton, Kan., talked about the various "communities" that had been important to her.

The class of 2006 consisted of 68 women and 33 men from 13 states and at least three other countries, including Azerbaijan, Kenya and Uganda. Seventy-four of the graduates were from Kansas, with three or more from Colorado and Texas. The class of 2006 set a new record of 77 members signing the Graduation Pledge of Social and Economic Responsibility (see photo, page 20).—*Melanie Zuercher of Bethel College*

Take courage from Christ's example and from his personal call to be his hands, his feet and his heart in a world of almost indescribable need.—Lee Snyder

Mary E. Klassen

AMBS graduates light candles during the May 19 commencement. Getaneh Ayele (left) will return to Ethiopia to teach at Meserete Kristos College in Addis Ababa. Lois Harder (right) will continue as copastor of Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan.

Continued from page 5

Title is not racist

In response to the Readers Say letter by Catherine Kruger ("Title Is Racist," May 2), I need to point out in strong terms that the title Miz is not. In the South—unlike the North—everyone uses Miss and Mister as terms of respect, especially when addressing an older person. The term Ms., Miss or Mrs. rolls off the warm Southern tongue as Miz. Rosella and Harold Regier, who by the way don't harbor even a single cell of racism in their whole beings, were attempting to capture the feel of the South in their article ("Katrina and Faith in Action," April 18). Those of you north of the Mason-Dixon line should be aware of the new South, where blacks are included in the terms of respect. Before the Civil Rights struggle, African Americans were addressed as simply "boy" or "girl" in impersonal ways. First names only, just as Northerners address each other even now, was the common practice when talking with blacks. Today, even our children address their teachers—both black and white—as Ms., Miss or, as you would hear it, Miz. It is a term of respect and definitely not racist.—*Robert Zehr, Gulf States Mennonite Conference moderator*

Convictions not distinctives

In the May 2 editorial ("Identity Crisis"), Everett J. Thomas seems to be blending two issues. On the one hand, he identifies a lack of identity stemming from a drift in convictions—which Mennonites have held to be faithful expressions of discipleship—in favor of culturally influenced values (i.e. pacifism). This is a deep concern for all of us. However, he also indicates a concern regarding non-Mennonite Christians who are behaving with convictions remarkably similar to ours. This is a problem for us? Is our need to be different so strong that we feel threatened by other Christians coming to some of our distinctives?

In "Anabaptists and Mennonites," Walter Klaassen writes: "We celebrate our distinctiveness from others in church and world. It looks suspiciously like another brand of sectarianism."

Distinctiveness is largely irrelevant. Faithfulness to Jesus, however, is central. If we are distinct borne out of a faithful expression of discipleship to Jesus, so be it. If the rest of the Christian world joins us, we should rejoice in the unity for which Jesus prayed. We should not, however, have an identity crisis. To do so would indicate that our identity is placed in being different rather than being faithful. I'm in favor of losing the term "distinctives" in favor of the word "convictions." The first defines differences, the second describes the ongoing journey into faithfulness.—*Terry Zehr, Watertown, N.Y.*

Immobilized by Darfur

Thank you for the May 16 editorial about Darfur ("Write a Letter"). On the way home from work today I listened to a "Fresh Air with Terry Gross" (National Public Radio) program about Darfur (http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5415043) and felt immobilized. Everett Thomas' call to letter-writing gave me a small way to act. Thanks.—*Christopher Clymer Kurtz, Stephens City, Va.*

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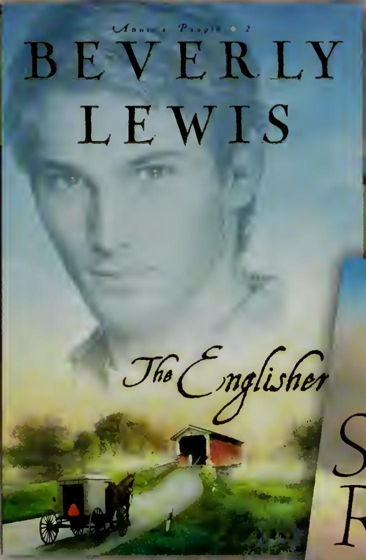
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WORKERS

Amstutz, Anita, was ordained as pastor May 7 at Albuquerque (N.M.) Mennonite Church

Audeoud, Martine, was licensed April 23 at Gilead Mennonite Church, Chesterville, Ohio.

Bartsch, Mark and Stephanie, were ordained April 30 as pastors at Toledo (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Hankee, Seth, was ordained May 7 as associate pastor at Greenmonte Mennonite Church, Stuarts Draft, Va.

Horton, Howard, was licensed Jan. 15 as pastor at Gilead Mennonite Church, Chesterville, Ohio.

Landis, Susan Mark, was licensed as a peace advocate for Central District Conference March 19 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Stoner, Rick, was licensed April 2 as youth pastor at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Weaver, Wayne, was licensed April 2 as minister of outreach at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Amanda A., was ordained April 30 as pastor at First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Baloo, Ian Jakob, May 4, to Jessica Baloo, Newton, Kan.

Benjamin, Tyce Conrad, April 22, to Dan and Tammy Schrag Benjamin, Freeman, S.D.

Berkey-Gerard, Cana Leigh, Jan. 9, to Mark and Melissa Berkey-Gerard, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Brenneman, Nicholas Ochoa, April 16, to Robert and Gaby Ochoa Brenneman, South Bend, Ind.

Buller, Tayler Kristine, March 1, to Shane and Letha Funk Buller, Laramie, Wy.

Byler, Nataly Lorene and Nathanyel Grant, April 21, to Gaylon and Annette Anderson Byler, Sarasota, Fla.

Calderon, Rachel Anne, April 17, to Darren and Maria Dzyadyk Calderon, Rochester, N.Y

Carpenter, Caleb Michael, May 6, to Michael and Bethany Randall Carpenter, Goshen, Ind.

Chupp, Tyson Andrew, May 13, to Gary and Melissa Stucky Chupp, Newton, Kan.

Deavers, Grant Robert, May 5, to Mark and Kristi Sanders Deavers, Valparaiso, Ind.

Denlinger, Peyton Alexander, March 5, to Chad and Jeannine Denlinger, Charlottesville, Va.

Elliott, Alissa Jaye, May 13, to Dan and Joetta Riegsecker Elliott, Swanton, Ohio.

Friesen, Haley Lynne, May 11, to Vernon and Anna Larrabee Friesen, Manhattan, Kan.

Gehman, Alana Grace, Feb. 22, to Rodney and Jodi Miller Gehman, Iowa City, Iowa.

Geissinger, Abraham Kauri Bardo, April 19, to Ben and Leslie Bardo Geissinger, Watertown, Minn.

Gerber, Brynne Olivia, April 14, to Troy and Lisa Smith Gerber, Harrisonburg, Va.

Gerber, Micah James, May 9, to Nolan and Lori Boller Gerber, Elkhart, Ind.

Gunderson, Nathan Leif, April 14, to Kurt and April Hepler Gunderson, Bridgewater, Va.

Hahn, Eleanor June, April 22, to Josh and Emily Evans Hahn, Timberville, Va.

Hangey, KyLee Faith, May 1, to Brent and Jillianne Helverson Hangey, Sellersville, Pa.

Hoeltzler, Joshua Martin, May 14, to Troy and Jessica Miller Hoeltzler, Manheim, Pa.

Johnson, Isabella Grace, April 9, to Ben and Brigitte Jaramillo Johnson, Tiffin, Iowa.

Kauffman, Devin Walter, April 26, to Duane and Deanne Eash Kauffman, Sarasota, Fla.

Kipfer, Jonas Wyatt, March 25, to Kevin and Denise Dombrowski Kipfer, Akron, N.Y.

Landis, Natalie Mae, May 9, to Matthew and Tana Landis, East Greenville, Pa.

LeBourgeois, Ryan Eric, March 13, to Eric and Janel Helverson LeBourgeois, Coopersburg, Pa.

Leaman, Jake Charles, April 12, to Patrick and Krisine Marchalonis Leaman, Shillington, Pa.

Longenecker, Jesse Michael, Feb. 26, to Lynn and Laurie Eshleman Longenecker, Lancaster, Pa.

Luehr, Joshua Dean, March 28, to Dean and Rebecca Bolli Luehr, Wood River, Neb.

King, Alisa Mackenzie, March 9, to David and Michelle Moyer King, Portland, Ore.

Mathies, Stefan Micah Kratz, May 3, to David and Anali Kratz Mathies, Harrisonburg, Va.

Neer, Daniel Anthony, April 12, to Steve and Surena Evans Neer, West Liberty, Ohio.

Peachey-Stoner, Malachi John, May 10, to Bob and Cheryl Peachey-Stoner, Hesston, Kan.

Reinhardt, Jacoby Ryne, May 16, to Brent and Marla Gerber Reinhardt, Elkhart, Ind.

Schellenberg, Lauren Emily Dakota, April 4, to Gerald and Rheina Schellenberg, Altona, Man.

Shetler, Roman James, April 13, to Jim and Jessica Birch Shetler, Dubuque, Iowa.

Stoltzfus, Adrianna Faith, April 7, to Amanda Stoltzfus, Parkesburg, Pa.

Stoltzfus, Nathan Lee, April 2, to Jeremy Stoltzfus and Stacy Schmucker, Enola, Pa.

Stutzman, Macy Rae, May 10, to Ryan and Tonya Troyer Stutzman, Milford, Neb.

Unruh, Adrian Gardner, April 16, to Tim and Alissa Schmidt Unruh, Newton, Kan.

Wenger, Nathan Daniel, March 23, to Ryan and Sherri-Lynn Kauffman Wenger, Salem, Ore.

Wyse, Keegan Noah, April 21, to Barnaby and Michelle Thuma Wyse, Archbold, Ohio.

Yoder, Samuel Jacob, April 6, to Jenny Yoder, Charlottesville, Va.

MARRIAGES

Armer/Zook: Curtis Armer, Lancaster, Pa., and Ashley Zook, Lancaster, May 6 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa.

Brandenberger/Rheinheimer: Julie Brandenberger, Goshen, Ind., and Benjamin Rheinheimer, Goshen, April 29 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Buatista/Hirschler: Dancy Bautista, Manila, Philippines, and Andre Hirschler, Goshen, Ind., Feb. 12 at First United Methodist Church, San Leandro, Calif.

Burkholder/Martin: Daniel Burkholder, Lancaster, Pa., and Amy Martin, Lancaster, May 6.

Childs/Tosh: Daniel Childs, Quakertown, Pa., and Michele Tosh, East Greenville, Pa., April 29 at Bible Fellowship, Quakertown.

Daniel/Horst: Gary Daniel, Akron, Pa., and Heather Horst, Akron, April 22 at Akron Mennonite Church.

Erb/Menz: Daniel Erb, New York, N.Y., and Cindy Menz, New York, May 6 at St. Luke's Lutheran, New York.

Fielitz/Rush: Kathleen Fielitz, Kidron, Ohio, and Ryan Rush, Portland, Ore., April 22 at Zion Mennonite Church, Winesburg, Ohio.

Gephardt/Sutter: Emily Gephardt, Warsaw, Ind., and Ryan Sutter, Goshen, March 4 at New Creation Fellowship, Warsaw.

Hernandez/Mendez: Maria P. Zavala Hernandez, Bruce, Wis., and Rigoberto Araujo Mendez, Bruce, May 7 at Exeland (Wis.) Mennonite Church.

Histand/Worthington: Julie A. Histand, Perkasie, Pa., and Brian Worthington, Perkasie, May 13 at First Baptist Church, Perkasie.

Hochstetler/Sensenig: Trina Hochstetler, Stone Lake, Wis., and Trennis Sensenig, Spooner, Wis., May 20 at Sand Lake Mennonite Church, Stone Lake.

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Miller/Ringenberg: Duane Miller, Sugar Creek, Ohio, and Rachel Ringenberg, Archbold, May 13 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Wagler/Weaver: Lydia Wagler, Hartville, Ohio, and Brent Weaver, Hartville, April 28 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

DEATHS

Allebach, Mildred G., 86, West Rockhill, Pa., died May 17. Spouse: Irwin Allebach (deceased). Parents: Allen and Lizzie Ruth Godshall. Child: Ralph. Funeral: May 19 at Dock Woods Community, Landsdale, Pa.

Brubacher, Eileen Martin, 75, Elmira, Ont., died April 29 of pancreatic cancer. Spouse: Ivan Brubacher. Parents: Edwin and Annie Martin. Children: David, Dennis, Darlene Weber, Marvin, Mark; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Buhler, Leucile, 99, Bluffton, Ohio, died April 15. Spouse: Gerhard Buhler (deceased). Parents: Sam and Sarah Steiner. Children: Genevieve Fast, Joanne Voth, Ruth Graber. Funeral: April 24 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Friesen, Hilda, 73, Altona, Man., died April 29. Spouse: Bernie H. Friesen. Parents: Cornelius Voth and Susan Wiebe. Children: Ralph, Lyndon, Kevin; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 2 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Hartman, Paul R., 82, Goshen, Ind., died April 26. Spouse: Erma Mumaw Hartman (deceased). Parents: Abram and Ada Hoover Hartman. Children: Darrel, Sharon Swartzendruber, Julia Stech, Marlene Sutter, Anna Mast; 28 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 2 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Heffentrager, Alice Wampole, 84, North Wales, Pa., died May 14. Spouse: Abel S. Heffentrager (deceased). Parents: William and Carrie Dettra Wampole. Children: Alice A. Newton, Susan D. Elverson, Sally G.; two grandchildren. Funeral: May 16 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa.

Heppner, Henry, 68, Altona, Man., died April 23. Spouse: Tina Heppner. Parents: Peter F. Heppner and Elizabeth Schroeder. Children: Joan Funk, Sandra Schoenwetter, Connie Heppner-Mueller; six grandchildren. Funeral: April 27 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Herbine, Pearl M., 77, Lansdale, Pa., died May 14. Spouse: Charles R. Herbine (deceased). Parents: John and Mary Kletzing Frey. Funeral: May 18 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale.

Horst, Nevin L., 75, Stevens, Pa., died April 22. Spouse: Blanche Mohler Horst. Parents: Benjamin B. and Martha Lehman Horst. Children: Timothy, Adelle Ward, Phyllis Nofziger, Rachel McLaughlin, Phillip; 15 grandchildren. Funeral: April 27 at Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Kehler, Hilda, 92, Altona, Man., died May 8. Spouse: Henry Kehler (deceased). Parents: Jacob P. Kehler and Anna Friesen. Children: Myron, Arlene Jardine, Ingrid Heide, Bernice Heinrichs; 14 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 13 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Kenagy, Kenneth Kay, 84, Canby, Ore., died April 22. Spouse: Dorothy Brown Kenagy. Parents: William and Emma Troyer Kenagy. Children: Norman; one grandchild. Funeral: April 28 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

Kulp, Daryl M., 26, Telford, Pa., died April 5. Parents: Scott and Betty Nice Kulp. Funeral: April 10 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Kurtz, Jacob M., 96, Fleetwood, Pa., died May 1. Spouse: Ada Kauffman Kurtz (deceased). Parents: Jacob S. and Lydia Kurtz. Children: Arlene Kreider, Allen, Norman, Raymond, Wayne, Paul, Leon, Ken, Sam, Luke, Floyd; 32 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Landis Homes, Lititz.

MacMillan, Nancy, 49, Pasadena, Calif., died April 13 of cancer. Father: Don MacMillan. Funeral: April 22 at Pasadena Mennonite Church.

Manley, Johnnie David, 66, Goshen, Ind., died May 7 of heart disease. Spouse: Marilyn Schweitzer Manley. Parents: Cyrus T. and Mildred Snow Manley. Child: Jerry Hawn; step-children: Kenneth Schweitzer, Allen Brown, Dewey Brown, Karen Schweitzer, Terri Miller, Christine Knowles, Dawn Jacobs, Connie Brown; two grandchildren; 13 step-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Solomon Creek United Methodist Church, Syracuse, Ind.

Miller, John N., 83, Rensselaer, Ind., died Jan. 23 of kidney failure and related health problems. Spouse: Dorothy Chupp Miller (deceased). Parents: Noah and Sarah Frey Miller. Children: Ronald Gale, Celina Diane; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Burr Oak Mennonite Church, Rensselaer.

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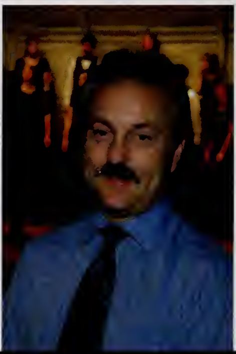

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Miller, Paul Lewis, 84, Wellman, Iowa, died May 1. Spouse: Nina Brenneman Miller. Parents: Eli L. and Anna Gingerich Miller. Children: Alice Theiler, Donna Steele; one grandchild. Funeral: May 4 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Miller, William B., 77, Sarasota, Fla., died April 24. Parents: Benjamin and Lovina Miller. Funeral: May 5 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Mishler, Violetta, 106, Lagrange, Ind., died April 29. Spouse: Howard E. Mishler (deceased). Parents: Daniel V. and Fanny Yoder. Children: Stanley, May Etta Schrock (deceased); eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; nine great-great-grandchildren; two great-great-step-grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at Emma Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind.

Neuman, Helen Ruth Elliott, 83, Hesston, Kan., died May 8. Spouse: Harold H. Neumann (deceased). Parents: Guy and Fern Elliott. Child: Susan Neumann Lamb; two grandchildren. Funeral: May 11 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Nofziger, Hermia E. Stuckey, 94, Archbold, Ohio, died May 9. Spouse: LaVern Nofziger (deceased). Parents: Henry and Emma Yoder Stuckey. Children: Shirley Short, Sharon Sauder, Verlyn; seven grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 13 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Rufenacht, Maynard E., 83, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 21. Spouse: (1st) Elverda Nofziger Rufenact (deceased), (2nd) Bernice Nofziger Rufenacht. Parents: Elias and Louisa Aschliman Rufenacht. Children: Jean Hartzler, James, Corwin, Terry, Lonnie; 11 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 25 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Schmidt, Zelda Harms, 95, North Newton, Kan., died April 25. Spouse: Ernest L. Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Henry and Susie Ewert Harms. Children: Iris Siemens, Carol Peterson; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: April 29 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Shank, Sharyn Katie, 66, Bowling Green, Ky., died May 12 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Lowell W. Shank. Parents: Wilfred and Frances Yoder Kanagy. Children: Jennifer Buckingham, Kim Jay. Funeral: May 15 at Johson/Vaughn/Phelps Funeral Home, Bowling Green.

Shields-Priddy, Sara Marie, 44, Lynden,Wash., died March 22 due to exposure to hantavirus. Spouse: Kirk Anthony Shields-Priddy. Parents: J.D. and Ruth Elerine Shields. Children: Jordan, Zachary. Funeral: March 27 at Langley (B.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Shoup, Mary Ellen, 85, Hemet, Calif., died April 25. Parents: Harry and Lottie Shoup. Funeral: May 3 at First Presbyterian Church, Hemet.

Showalter, Rhoda Elizabeth, 63, Waynesboro, Va., died May 7. Parents: Alva and Mary Frances Driver Showalter. Funeral: May 10 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro.

Smith, Burdetta Hochstetler, 71, Wooster, Ohio, died April 2. Spouse: William Smith. Parents: Donald and Blanche Hileman Hochstetler. Children: William Smith Jr., Jackie Zuercher; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Memorial service: April 13 at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Warkentin, Albert, 99, Buhler, Kan., died May 7. Spouse: Thelma Froese Warkentin (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Matilda Hinz Warkentin. Children: Darwin, Rose Diasio, Betty Krehbiel; nine grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; nine great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 10 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Wilson, Catherine Rocke, 85, Chenoa, Ill., died May 5. Spouse: Virgil O. Wilson (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Ella Rediger Rocke. Children: Larry, Roger, Doug; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 8 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa.

Witmer, Iola, 95, Orrville, Ohio, died April 14. Spouse: Owen Witmer (deceased). Children: Mabel Horst, Margaret Wenger, Melvin; eight grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 21 at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Alta Shoemaker, 89, Springs, Pa., died March 26. Spouse: Homer M. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Ellis and Nettie Maust Shoemaker. Funeral: March 29 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Yoder, David S., 85, Lancaster, Pa., died May 7. Spouse: Pauline Gehman Yoder. Children: Dale, Karen Gyger; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 11 at Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Fannie M., 99, Neffsville, Pa., died April 23. Spouse: Jacob C. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Christ B. and Fannie Yoder. Child: Betty Kaufman; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 26 at Oley (Pa.) Valley Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Grace Alderfer, 97, Souderton, Pa., died April 11. Spouse: J. Walter Yoder (deceased). Parents: Franklin and Katie Landis Alderfer. Children: Clyde, Edna Swartley; 11 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 14 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

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Bay Shore Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla., is seeking applicants for ***minister of worship/music***. Please contact Mary Ann Lederman at 941-377-1956 after 5 p.m. or email rmalederman@msn.com.

Philadelphia Mennonite High School (grades 9-12) seeks applicants for the following positions for the 2006-07 school year: ***PT English instructor, FT science/math instructor, PT guidance counselor, PT custodian/maintenance***. Please send resumé to Barbara Moses, Principal, Philadelphia Mennonite High School, 860 N. 24th St., Philadelphia, PA 19130; fax 215-769-4063; email mos147@comcast.net.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking a qualified applicant to fill the position of ***associate director of development***. This position is responsible for soliciting funds for the ongoing operations and special projects of the university. At least 75 percent of the focus of the associate director of development is to generate financial resources from individuals, businesses and congregations. Bachelor's degree required. Experience in a Christian academic community; fund-raising; business or organizational structures; banking, finance and/or insurance; or related fields will be helpful. Send a letter of application, a resumé, and three references to: Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. For more information visit our Web site: www.emu.edu/humanresources/vacancy/allopen.html.

The **Gather 'Round** curriculum, a project of the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, is accepting applications for three staff positions: ***editor*** (full-time or shared) to edit content of junior youth, youth, parent/caregiver and preschool units; ***marketing and communications coordinator*** (half-time), to design and implement marketing strategies and to develop communications resources; ***project assistant*** (full-time), to provide administrative support and marketing assistance, and to update Web site and e-commerce site. Project may consider breaking out or combining pieces of job descriptions in different ways. Elgin, Ill., location required for project assistant. Brethren or Mennonite preferred; denominational balance on project staff considered. Deadline for applications: July 15, or until positions are filled. Learn more about the curriculum at www.gatherround.org. Mail cover letter and resumé to Anna Speicher, Director and Editor, Gather 'Round Curriculum, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Arizona voluntary service opportunities. **Goldensun**, together with Phoenix area Mennonite churches, offer ***Christian service and vocational opportunities*** while living in community with adult people with developmental disabilities. Contact Leroy Willems, 623-219-9647 or email Leroy.w@cox.net.

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Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks F/T ***director of global ministries*** to lead EMM's long-term sending. Required: long-term mission experience, bachelor's degree and Anabaptist core values. Preferred: graduate theological and/or musicological credentials, and experience and/or training in Anabaptist context(s). Flexible start date: September 2006 or later. For more information, contact Jeanette Hunt at jeanetteh@emm.org or 717-898-2251 by June 23, 2006.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2006.

Seeking ***dorm life director*** to lead dorm program and develop a nurturing, caring, Christ-centered community. Responsibilities include managing dorm staff, planning weekday and weekend activities, providing a safe, enjoyable, learning environment and being a role model and mentor for youth. Leadership and youth work experience desired. Must be willing to work with students from different cultures.

Assistant dorm life director to provide planning, leadership and management support for the dorm life director. The dorm life positions could be filled as a husband and wife team.

Food services director to direct food preparation and supervise kitchen staff. Manage inventory, record keeping, the federal lunch program and student assistants. Ensure health standards are followed. Create a healthy atmosphere for students and staff. Experience required.

Contact Mike Wenger at mwenger@westernmennoniteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

High school math/science teacher for algebra and introduction to physical science. Full-time position with opportunities to coach. Contact Darrel Camp at dcamp@westernmennoniteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

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Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) has an opening for a church relations manager (CRM) for the Midwest (KS, OK, NE). A CRM is responsible for building awareness of MMA in congregations and conferences. This is done by building connections to MMA services; nurturing the advocate system; and helping churches use MMA fraternal programs. Qualified candidates will have a belief in the mission of MMA and a willingness to gain general knowledge of MMA products and services; good communication and public speaking abilities; understanding of local church structures; significant congregational experience; and a willingness to travel (50 to 70 nights per year). For more information about the responsibilities and qualifications of this position, please visit our Website, www.mma-online.org, and go to "Careers."

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Evangelical, Ecumenical and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation: Essays in Honor of Wilbert R. Shenk, edited by James R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky and Charles E. Van Engen (Orbis Books, 2006, $25), includes essays from 26 missiologists from key Christian denominational families that reflect on convergences and challenges in mission theology and how Mennonite missiologist Wilbert R. Shenk has influenced their conversations.

Christian Spirituality: God's Presence Through the Ages by Richard J. Woods (Orbis Books, 2006, $25) is a new expanded edition of a book that first appeared in 1989. This narrative history of Christian spirituality explores the progressive realization of "a sense of God as the compassionate origin, unfailing guide and infinite destiny of the whole human family."

Transforming the Powers: Peace, Justice and the Domination System, edited by Ray Gingerich and Ted Grimsrud (Fortress Press, 2006, $20), includes 12 essays by seven theologians and ethicists who apply Walter Wink's groundbreaking analysis to economics, politics and government, warmaking and peacemaking, personal ethics, and ecological and social justice.

Gandhi and Beyond: Nonviolence for an Age of Terrorism by David Cortright (Paradigm Publishers, 2006, $24.95) offers a critical evaluation and refinement of Gandhi's message, laying the foundation for a renewed and deepened dedication to nonviolence as the universal path to social progress and antidote to terrorism.

The Fragrance of God by Vigen Guroian (Eerdmans, 2006, $13) unfolds biblical themes of the grandeur of God's creation, the senses as paths to experiencing God and the garden as a place of birth, death and renewal.

Lesslie Newbigin: Missionary Theologian: A Reader by Lesslie Newbigin (Eerdmans, 2006, $16) concentrates mainly but not exclusively on the later writings of the internationally esteemed British missionary, pastor, apologist, theologian and ecumenical stateman. These demonstrate his missionary engagement with Western culture following his return to Great Britain from India in 1974.

The Sacred Art of Forgiveness: Forgiving Ourselves and Others Through God's Grace by Marcia Ford (SkyLight Paths, 2006, $16.99) encourages readers to approach forgiveness and reconciliation directly in their lives through a step-by-step process and shows how through forgiveness we can keep in touch with the Divine rather than shutting ourselves down in bitterness and pain.

The Jonah Factor: 13 Spiritual Steps to Finding the Job of a Lifetime by Ed Klodt (Augsburg Books, 2006, $12.99) is a tool for discerning God's call and finding joy in one's work.

Butterflies Under Our Hats by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, illustrated by Joani Keller Rothenberg (Paraclete Press, 2006, $16.95), is a children's book inspired by a Jewish folktale about hope.

You, Me and Who?: 5-Minute Devotionals for You and Your Date by Emily Parke Chase (Kindred Productions, 2006, $8.99) invites God into the center of each dating relationship and offers ideas for creative dates.

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A shadow illness

Sara Wenger Shenk is an author and serves as associate dean and associate professor of Christian education at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

During a recent sharing time in a congregation I visit, one gentleman spoke up with an unusual acknowledgement of personal pain in the context of public worship. He said, slowly and tearfully: "This past year has been a very difficult year for me personally. In January I experienced a long winter season that extended into June. I was battling depression. I felt alone, scared and helpless. [My wife] tried to reach out to me, but I pushed her away. And it wasn't until I reached a breaking point that I finally admitted that this was bigger than anything I could fix by myself. Finally, after months of secrecy I expressed to [my wife] that I needed help and that I needed her. It has been an up and down road for me. This fall has been one of the up times. But I am fearful of January. I have put a support team in place. ... The biggest thing I realized is that I can't face this thing alone and that it's better to be open and talking through it. Depression loves silence. I commit myself not to be silent this year ... so I can be a husband and a father."

Many people knew this gentleman; only those near him were aware that he had been so ill for six dark months. While we readily invite prayer for physical ailments of all sorts, the stigma associated with mental illness makes it a rare act of courage to publicly speak of it. Another member of the congregation stood up to respond: "I feel called to stand up in support of all of you who suffer from depression. A dark night of the soul; unbearable solitude."

"My husband's sharing made me uncomfortable at first," his wife admitted to me weeks later. And some people's comments afterward seemed "voyeuristic." One person implied he shouldn't have talked about it until he was "on the other side," with victory over it. Some used Scripture in ways that felt like platitudes. But overall, his "going public" has resulted in more good than bad, she said.

"My husband's public honesty," she said, "has allowed us to be more honest with each other in our marriage. And because of his acknowledgement, the men in our small group have become more willing to talk about their stuff. Somehow, another guy sharing made it all right. And men come up to him at church more readily to talk about their own struggle with anxiety attacks and depression. His speaking up in public was an important step for him; good for him even though it was hard for me as his wife."

There's so much stuff people deal with that they keep hidden—eating disorders, addictions, she said. "I wish people would feel more able to speak in church about that real stuff. From the conversations we have in our small group now," she said, "it's clear that everybody is dealing with hard stuff. And when people in general come to me, I can tell who is truly able to empathize because they've been there; they don't say, 'It'll be OK; you'll get through it.' No. They simply say in one way or another, 'I'm so sorry.' It's a great support to have others who know what a daily struggle it is. And somehow, when you deal with the hard stuff in life, you discover that this is life. Until you deal with illness or death, it's like you don't know how. I have a group of women friends," she said. "We can say anything to each other. We support each other; cry and talk nonstop. All four of us have a family member who's struggled with depression."

It's a great support to have others who know what a daily struggle it is. And somehow, when you deal with the hard stuff in life, you discover that this is life.

Shadow Voices, a recent DVD released by Mennonite Media, says that 45 million Americans live with mental illness. They are in our families and congregations. Because of the fear, stigma and shame associated with this illness, we tend not to talk about it. We tend to look down on people, often faulting them or their families for failures that must have caused the illness. However, it is an illness like any other illness, though "the only illness in the world where you never get a covered dish." And with proper treatment, recovery is probable. *Shadow Voices* suggests that the stigma is best overcome when people with mental illness themselves tell their story in public.

"In retrospect, I'm glad my husband shared," his wife said. "Our church feels like a safe space. His owning his illness made church a better place to be. It's freed him to be real with not being 'on' all the time." TM

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Mennonite Voluntary Service worker Fjaere Harder, program coordinator of North Baltimore Mennonite Church's Asylum Seekers Housing Network, with the child of an asylum seeker.

This MVS worker nurtures global connections without leaving home

Through Asylum Seekers Housing Network, a program of North Baltimore Mennonite Church (NBMC), Fjaere Harder has discovered a profound connection. With refugees who come to the United States fleeing persecution, and with other Mennonite Church USA members serving in their own communities and internationally.

Harder works at Reservoir Hill House of Peace, the old mansion NBMC turned into a transitional home for refugees and asylum seekers from Cameroon, Afghanistan, the Congo and other countries. As Harder helps people facing major upheaval in their lives, she models not only what it means to be a Mennonite – but also what it means to be a Christian and an American. And as she addresses the needs of refugees from around the world, Harder recognizes the need for all parts of Mennonite Church USA to think beyond ourselves and reach out in mission and service to others in need – wherever we are.

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Everett J. Thomas

It is time to build

By early July two key boards in Mennonite Church USA must make a major decision—whether to approve a building project costing $9.36 million (construction, endowment and fund-raising expenses) for denominational programs in Elkhart, Ind.

It is time to build this facility.

Mennonite Mission Network and Executive Board discussed the project during their joint meeting four months ago. At that time, both groups agreed that a decision about whether to proceed would be made at the Executive Board's meeting June 29-July 1 and at Mennonite Mission Network's meeting July 8-10. A consultant has been working with both groups to determine the level of financial support available for the project from prospective donors. Any decision to move forward will be based on those findings.

The plan is to build facilities next to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus on the south side of Elkhart. Locating offices for executive leadership and Mission Network staff there—and perhaps other agencies in the future—will create important synergy with one of our two seminary communities. Having Mennonite Mission Network and Executive Board so closely invested in and identified with such a project will also encourage new collaboration between them.

We are tasting the new wine; now we need a new wineskin.

But such future needs for denominational program agencies may not connect with many people sitting in the pews. Further, some thoughtful people will question whether these synergies are reason enough for a brick-and-mortar project of this magnitude. The boards' February discussion anticipated the churchwide discussion we must have should the proposal move forward.

"People in my [central Kansas] area will say, 'They complain about not having enough money … and bringing home missionaries while building a fancy new building,'' said Executive Board member Kevin Goertzen (see Feb. 21, page 20).

But there are compelling reasons for building sooner rather than later; these reasons range from the pragmatic to the symbolic.

First the pragmatic: The rent and renovation costs for office space in downtown Elkhart would pay off the new facility in about 15 years. Even if the current space were renovated, differences during those 15 years would be significant. Instead of chopped-up rooms scattered amid two or three floors in the current building, a new facility would allow for efficient and cost-effective offices designed for systems unique to church work.

Today, the offices are housed on the second and third floors of the tallest building in Elkhart. It was originally built as a hotel. In the mid-1970s, the former Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) bought the building for $1 and spent much time and money converting two floors into office spaces. Five floors of the nine-story building were converted into apartments; Greencroft Retirement Communities Inc., managed those floors for senior-living clients.

I worked in that building for 11 years while president of the (now defunct) Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. MBCM, MBM, the (now defunct) Mennonite Board of Education and Greencroft were the owners. I voted to sell the facility not only because it was reaching the end of its useful life for office space (antiquated wiring, heating and air-conditioning) but because I wanted to unhook from old Mennonite Church (MC) identities and make ourselves available for whatever a transformed new denomination would create. The boards' shares of the $782,000 sale proceeds were transferred to the new entities in Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada and helped fund the transformation.

Five years into this transformation we are tasting the new wine; now we need a new wineskin.

But why is now the time?

Support for missions has been a hallmark of the World War II generation in the church. In 2005, Mission Network leaders suggested that some of their retirement-age supporters may want to include such a brick-and-mortar project in their estate planning. It makes sense that those who have given so generously and compassionately of their wealth for 50 years would want to leave such a legacy for future generations. Doing so for the right building will also keep Mennonite Church USA mission-focused as a denomination.—*ejt*

TheMennonite

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lives of influence

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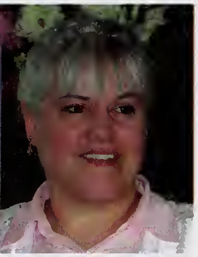
Dwell on these things

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.—Philippians 4:8 (NIV)



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

As we drove across Ohio, I thought how nice it was that our conference had asked us to make this trip. We were transporting a carload of high school students for a visit to Goshen (Ind.) College. Our conference youth minister, who normally would have gone, had other responsibilities that weekend. Knowing we had two daughters living in Goshen, our conference had asked us to make the trip. What a delightful responsibility!

Not all pastoral responsibilities are delightful. At times, pastoring can feel heavy. It is all too easy to dwell on the heaviness. It is important to recognize these times of heaviness because they drain one's reservoir of energy—physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally. Recognizing this drain can remind us to take the necessary time to restore these same resources. It is even more important, however, to recognize what gives or restores energy.

Isaiah recommends the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. This is similar to the advice that Paul gives the Philippians: Think about what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable—anything that is praiseworthy. What causes praise to spring to our lips is the place where our minds should dwell. Praise is the antidote for despair.

Praise may also assist us as we invite others to consider a call to pastoral ministry. One of the current priorities of Mennonite Church USA is Cultivating a Culture of Call. While it is the responsibility of many across the church to invite others to consider God's call upon their lives, it is the pastor's responsibility to model what it means to be a pastor. The pastor who dwells in heaviness is probably not an effective pastor for anyone. But the pastor who lives out of the joy found in Jesus Christ inspires all and may have an encouraging effect on the person(s) God is nudging toward pastoring. I want those considering pastoral ministry to have a clear picture. They need to know it is not all easy. But beyond that, they need to know that God sustains through the tough times and grants joy for the journey.

While there has been much that has been heavy in the past several years, God has also granted much to be joyful about. It is in these praiseworthy places that I need to dwell.

One of the places of joy for me is that my congregation recognized the need for my husband and me to have some time to replenish our depleted resources of energy. We were told, "Sabbatical is not only a good idea, it is necessary, and you will take one." What a gift! As I write, I am in the first week of my three-month sabbatical. To be able to take leisurely time for my devotional life, to have time to allow my creative side to play, to visit other pastors and churches that have lived through major transitions in healthy ways, to spend some time in retreat settings, to visit friends and family who live far away are all things I am doing or expect to do. I also expect they will help restore energy for me.

Later today I plan to focus on my creative side as I play with fabric. While I cut pieces for a quilt, I expect to reflect on the two texts mentioned in this article. Paul writes his words of encouragement from a prison cell. The words from Isaiah are a part of the text Jesus chose to begin his public ministry. I invite you to read Philippians 4 and Isaiah 61:1-3. Then put on your own "garment of praise" while you name the places of joy God has granted you. TM

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 12, June 20, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526

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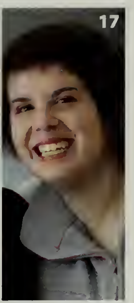

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Martial arts for peacemaking

While the martial arts are no doubt preferable to the barrel of a gun ("Making Peace," May 16), I do not believe they belong in the Mennonite defensive arsenal. Certainly they threaten the use of physical force or violence at least as a last resort. Calling the program in these arts "Peacemakers" reminds one of the name President Reagan used for his mammoth missile: The Peacekeeper. I believe that our defense should remain moral force or suasion.—*John A. Hertlzer, Mathews, Va.*

Congo also needs support

Thanks for Everett Thomas' May 16 editorial urging Mennonite Church USA members to send letters to their legislators supporting humanitarian aid in Sudan ("Send a Letter"). This tangible step is well worth the few minutes of time it will take each of us.

I want to alert members to also support aid in the Congo. The political and economic climate there is also severe and, at a time when Mennonite Church USA is trying to build relationships with two of the Mennonite conferences in the Congo, our support is especially appropriate.

Please contact your senators and ask them to support S. 2125, a bill that would increase U.S. aid to the Congo by 25 percent, provide for a special envoy to eastern Congo, strengthen United Nations peacekeeping forces and reinvigorate economic, social and political infrastructure as the Congo transitions out of war. For more information, check out www.ThirdWay.com.—*Ron Byler, associate executive director, Mennonite Church USA*

IN THIS ISSUE

From time to time we receive articles and photos that honor recently deceased friends and family members. This year three such tributes arrived on our desks; we combined them into this issue, called "Lives of Influence." Jim Bishop writes about Robert J. Baker (page 8). In "Grandma Emma's Quilt," Roberta J. Albrecht links red-plaid quilt pieces to her family history (page 11). Freeman J. Miller cherishes the memories of a spiritual father, George Kuttab, in "Family Treasures" (page 14). This issue also includes (page 16) the final article in a special series we called, "Together Sharing All of Christ With All of Creation"—stories about the experiences of mission workers around the world. On page 18 we welcome Marty Lehman to the "Leadership" column written by Mennonite Church USA executive leadership staff members. Lehman's first column is entitled, "Where are the Women?" Extended news coverage of Mennonite Central Committee's Annual General Meeting—and its attempt to respond to the church's generosity—begins on page 20.—*Editor*

Put out by comment

I enjoyed the May 2 issue of *The Mennonite* talking about our identity today as compared to times gone by. In particular, I felt that Everett J. Thomas' editorial on "Identity Crisis" summed up the issue quite nicely. However, I felt a bit put out when Thomas categorized Mennonites as merely a North American "Eurocentric" body.

I am a proud African-American. I entered the church as an adult and studied long and hard the traditions of those Anabaptists who were willing to die for their beliefs. I grew up in South Africa; I saw my brother get killed right in front of me when I was 5 years old. I languished in a South African prison for nearly two years and was tortured because I defied the white power structure of the South African police. I worked with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Palestine for three years and was beaten by radical Israeli settlers for escorting children to school in September 2004.

We all deserve to sit at the table. I will sit at it in my own right, as a proud black man. Acknowledge us all for the people we are as we acknowledge you. If that is not commitment to the Anabaptist tradition, then I don't know what is.—*Christopher Brown, Tucson, Ariz.*

No personal ads?

Readers voted against personal ads in *The Mennonite* with 32 percent voting yes and 53 percent voting no ("Online Poll Results," May 16). But where can single Mennonites put personal ads to find a Christian spouse? Many Mennonite singles are leaving the Mennonite church because they feel they are not being heard—or valued as an important part of their church. Many singles would like to be married to other Mennonites, but if you are in a small Mennonite church, how can this be accomplished?—*Steve Koenig, Lancaster, Pa.*

Editor's note: Among more than 20,000 people who read The Mennonite, *77 responded to our Web site poll question asking whether we should offer personal ads. No decision has yet been made.*

Cheap shot at NAFTA

The May 2 article "Program Shows Both Sides of Border," took a cheap shot at the North American Free Trade Agreement. It contained the subtle argument that NAFTA is wrong and should have never been implemented. This is wrong. Mennonites should, in general, support free trade agreements like NAFTA. It is part of our culture to support programs that result in greater efficiency and are based on the reduction of international barriers. Generally NAFTA has benefited all sides of the border by contributing to raising the average standard of living in the participating countries—Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Like all changes in economic policies, there are winners and losers. Often the losers are louder and more visible. And the winners don't even know they are winners. If NAFTA had not been implemented, the winners and losers lists would be different, and those on the poorer end of the spectrum would have been even worse off and more numerous. It is right that Christians should assist the poor. But don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.—*Jack Janzen, Minneapolis*

Converted by the church

Ryan Ahlgrim's May 16 article "Converted by the Church" starts by describing conversion as "convinced to make a commitment to Christ." This is a widely accepted definition of the new birth—or being born from above—and becoming a Christian. But it may be helpful to broaden the meaning of the term "convert."

Ahlgrim goes on to write about "nurtured," "life in Christ," ongoing transformation and lasting healing of emotional wounds as being true conversion. These are some of the facets of maturing in Christ, following the initial decision to yield one's life to Jesus as Lord. And yes, the church is involved in both converting and discipling those who convert. The discipling process needs more careful attention in most of our congregations. —*Walter Smeltzer, Peoria, Ill.*

Rulers established by God

Re Steven J. Harnish's letter in the April 4 Readers Say: I dismissed his view because I read Romans 13 and not just verse 4. Verse 1 says: "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God." That means everyone in whatever country.

The authorities established by God have included Stalin, Mao, Hitler, Saddam, the presidents of the United States, the premiers of Canada and authorities of all countries. There would be quite an objection if the ruler of another country attacked the United States in order to deal with U.S. wrongdoers. Where in the Bible is anyone commanded to overthrow the rulers that God has established? Romans 13:4 hardly means that we go to war against another country. It means that the rulers deal with the wrongdoers over which they have the rule. It is quite a stretch to say the rulers of the United States are ordained to deal with all the wrongdoers in the world.—*Carl L. Smeltzer, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Praying for leaders

I take President Bush and First Lady Laura Bush to the throne of grace earnestly and often along with their family, close advisers, Cabinet—indeed, the whole administration, including the Pentagon. May the Spirit flood their lives and lead them safely through turbulent waters. The challenges and opportunities before them are awesome—but God holds them in the hollow of his hands.

As disciples of the Prince of Peace, recent world events must have filled them with agonizing moments as narrow, nationalistic, violent voices clamored to be heard, sometimes contradicting the law of God. We pray they will be empowered to speak and act prophetically in a manner unprecedented in the history of the world: Leading the people of this great nation in compassionate confession of sins of commission and omission through which the American Dream was denigrated into the excesses of the American Empire.

America—and the world—will hail their courage and faithfulness as they rescue all of us from the brink of nuclear disaster and lead us toward a world free of war, where the lion can lie down with the lamb.—*Jacob B. (J. B.) Shenk, Goshen, Ind.*

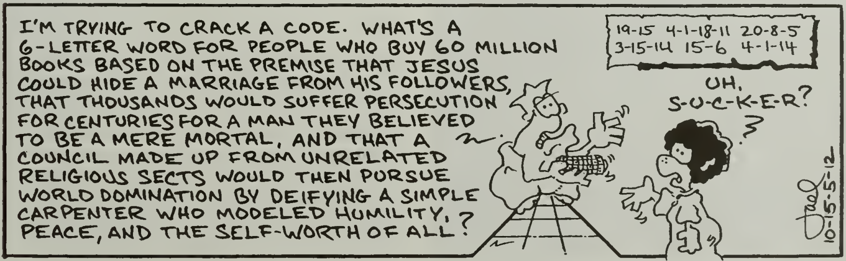
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Will your church have a retreat at a Mennonite camp or retreat center this year? (43 votes)

○ Yes (42%)
○ No (51%)
○ Not sure (7%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


I'M TRYING TO CRACK A CODE. WHAT'S A 6-LETTER WORD FOR PEOPLE WHO BUY 60 MILLION BOOKS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT JESUS COULD HIDE A MARRIAGE FROM HIS FOLLOWERS, THAT THOUSANDS WOULD SUFFER PERSECUTION FOR CENTURIES FOR A MAN THEY BELIEVED TO BE A MERE MORTAL, AND THAT A COUNCIL MADE UP FROM UNRELATED RELIGIOUS SECTS WOULD THEN PURSUE WORLD DOMINATION BY DEIFYING A SIMPLE CARPENTER WHO MODELED HUMILITY, PEACE, AND THE SELF-WORTH OF ALL?
19-15 4-1-18-11 20-8-5 3-15-14 15-6 4-1-14
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IN BRIEF

Goshen, Bethel produce NAIA All-Americans

Goshen (Ind.) College and Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., had athletes earn All-American honors at the NAIA National Track and Field Championships May 25-27 at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University. Juniors Petrana Petkova and Laura Herr helped Goshen's women's track and field program to 12th place, its top NAIA national championship finish in school history, each claiming All-American honors. Petkova finished second in 10,000-meter and 5,000-meter runs, and Herr finished sixth in the marathon. Bethel's Jeff Buller finished third in the javelin, setting a Bethel record.—*Goshen and Bethel colleges*

Spain hosts MERK for first time

More than 400 Mennonites from 11 European countries and other continents met May 26-28 in Barcelona for the Mennonite European Regional Conference (MERK), which took place in Spain for the first time. The theme was "Freedom Is Commitment: Living God's Will." The Mennonite church in Barcelona started 28 years ago and has 50 members involved in work with the elderly and handicapped as well as in mediation. The program, translated into five languages, included 30 workshops.—*Mennonite World Conference*

CPT workers to leave Baghdad

TORONTO—Christian Peacemaker Teams has decided to suspend operations in Baghdad, Iraq, according to a May 29 announcement on its CPTnet site.

Following the rescue of CPT workers Jim Looney and Harmet Singh Sooden of Canada and Briton Norm Kimber March 23, four months after they were kidnapped, the remaining CPT workers in Iraq consulted working partners, friends and other advisers about their continuing presence in the country.

The consensus of the conversations was that the team should continue its work in Iraq but leave the city of Baghdad for a time, probably between two and six months, and then reevaluate the situation. The main reasons given for being out of Baghdad were concerns for safety and the continuing uncertainties around formation of a new government. Because the situation is fluid and because CPT's profile is very high right now, being out of Baghdad temporarily surfaced as the most reasonable course of action.

Two CPT Iraq interns are in the region and have been exploring another part of Iraq.—*CPTnet*

Church leaders address Middle East crisis

WINNIPEG—The looming humanitarian crisis among the Palestinian people prompted leaders of 20 churches and church-related organizations in the United States to write a letter to President Bush, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Jason Harrison

Off to camp

Eight Goshen (Ind.) College students are spending their summers pursuing an interest in outdoor ministry at a church-related camp or retreat center through the college's Camping Inquiry Program. The group of CIP participants includes (left to right) sophomore Amanda Beachy, junior Sami Fulton, first-year Peter Koontz, Anna Mast, first-year Ashley Ervin, junior Andrew Horst and first- year Sara Becker-Hoover. Junior Scott Lehman is not pictured.—*Goshen College*

Immediate action is needed to restore the hope for peace between the state of Israel and the future state of Palestine, states the letter signed by Robb Davis, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee, along with other leaders representing churches and organizations from Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions.

This action requires a strong commitment to find negotiated solutions to the issues at the heart of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, state the church leaders in the letter dated May 2.

The church leaders are members of Churches for Middle East Peace, a Washington-based coalition that advocates for justice and peace for all people in the Middle East. Information on Churches for Middle East is available online at cmep.org.

To prevent a humanitarian crisis among the Palestinian people, the leaders asked governments to provide both space and opportunity for the newly elected Hamas government to make positive changes, while finding mechanisms that allow financial assistance to reach the Palestinian people.

Other concerns raised by church leaders included the threat of violence, the establishment of a mutually negotiated border between Israel and the future Palestine and the status of Jerusalem. —*Mennonite Central Committee*

Medicare Part D brings new MMA members

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) recently helped more than 9,000 people find their way through the enrollment process for Medicare Part D. By midnight on May 15, when open enrollment for the new prescription drug benefit plan closed, MMA had enrolled 9,636 members.

Included in that number were about 2,000 people who, prior to enrolling, had not participated in an MMA health plan.

MMA is working with Uni-Care, a Wellpoint Company, to offer Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. Members wishing to enroll in the future may do so between Nov. 15 and Dec. 31 of each year, though higher premiums may apply. —*MMA*

Bluffton awarded Lilly grant for Pathways

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton University has been awarded a renewal grant of more than $499,000 by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., to lend sustainability to its Pathways to Mission and Vocation program after the existing grant ends in December 2008. The grant comes through an initiative called Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation, created by the Lilly Endowment.

Courtesy photo

king and working where Jesus served

art of a Partners in Mission work group held May 5-22 in
el/Palestine, Dorothy Jean Weaver (left) and Lois Loeser
a donkey carrying a large bag of weeds that the group
by hand. The 18-member group later toured and wor-
ed in Jerusalem before working at the International
ter of Bethlehem, a ministry of Christmas Lutheran Church.
ver and Kevin A. Clark of Eastern Mennonite Seminary,
isonburg, Va., led the participants from Indiana,
nsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina. The biennial work
up is an outreach of Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions
ooperation with EMS.—*Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

With the grant, Bluffton will continue Pathways activities, focusing on peacemaking as vocation, student and faculty exploration of vocation and engaging diversity, while evaluating the success of current activities.—*Bluffton University*

Goshen students explore ministry, service

GOSHEN, Ind.—Seven Goshen College students will participate in the Ministry Inquiry Program (MIP) over the summer, and eight will spend their summer with a faith-based service organization through Goshen's Service Inquiry Program (SIP).

The summer group of Goshen MIP participants includes Janie Beck, a sophomore Bible and religion major from Archbold, Ohio, who will serve at Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church; Brooke Blough, a sophomore collegiate studies major from Louisville, Ohio, who will serve at Oxford Circle in Philadelphia; Krista Ehst, a sophomore Bible and religion major from Bally, Pa., who will serve at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Gainesville, Fla.; Sheldon Good, a first-year communication and business major from Telford, Pa., who will serve at the Franconia Conference Office in Souderton, Pa.; Justin Heinz, a junior Bible and religion major from Goshen who will serve at Benton Mennonite Church in Goshen; Jeff Hochstetler, a sophomore business and history major from Orrville, Ohio, who will serve at Grace Community Church, Bryan, Ohio; Alicia Janzen, a senior social work major from Beatrice, Neb., who will serve at Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis.

The Ministry Inquiry Program is a joint effort of Mennonite Church USA and the five Mennonite colleges in the United States.

The summer group of Goshen SIP participants include Kristine Bowman, a junior English major from Millersburg, Ind., who will serve in Benin, West Africa; Dominique Burgunder-Johnson, a senior peace, justice and conflict studies major from Vilseck, Germany, who will serve at the Military Council Network in Germany; Dara Joy Jaworowicz, a first-year music major from Kentwood, Mich., who will serve in Kentucky with Sharing with Appalachian People; Hannah Johnson, a first-year psychology major from Harrisonburg, Va., who will serve at Mennonite Central Committee's office in Washington, D.C.; Daniel Merkt Blatz, a first-year physics major from San Antonio, Texas, who will serve with Discovering Outreach and Opportunity for Reflection in San Antonio; Hilary Watson, a first-year Bible and religion major from Seattle, who will serve with DOOR in Chicago; Sarah Wilson, a junior Spanish major from White Heath, Ill., who will serve with SWAP in Kentucky; Matthew Yoder, a sophomore communication major from Lancaster, Pa., who will serve in Denver with DOOR.—*Goshen College*

Mennonite Your Way Directory available

MUNDELEIN, Ill.—The new, 30th anniversary edition of the Mennonite Your Way Hospitality Directory is ready to order. MYW revives an old tradition by organizing a network connecting the hospitality of those wishing to be hosts and travelers seeking fellowship. To order, visit www.mennoniteyourway.com, myw@mywdirectory.com or MYW, 80 W. Sylvan Drive, Mundelein, IL 60060-3315, 847-949-6170.—*Mennonite Your Way*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

A tropical arctic in the distant past

The first detailed analysis of an extraordinary climatic and biological record from the seabed near the North Pole shows that 55 million years ago the Arctic Ocean was much warmer than scientists imagined—a Floridian year-round average of 74 degrees. The findings, published June 1 in the journal *Nature*, fill in a blank spot in scientists' understanding of climate history. And while they show that much remains to be learned about climate change, they suggest that scientists have greatly underestimated the power of heat-trapping gases to warm the Arctic. Experts not connected with the studies say they support the idea that heat-trapping gases—not slight variations in Earth's orbit—largely determine warming and cooling. "The new research provides additional important evidence that greenhouse-gas changes controlled much of climate history, which strengthens the argument that greenhouse-gas changes are likely to control much of the climate future," says one such expert, Richard B. Alley, a geoscientist at Pennsylvania State University.—*New York Times*

Oil-free Sweden

Sweden has announced plans to be the first oil-free country in the world by 2010. Plans call for renewables—including biofuels, wind and wave power—to replace fossil fuels. —*Yes!*

A tribute to Robert J. Baker

His pen was mightier than the sword

by Jim Bishop

Robert J. (Bob) Baker possessed deep love for his fellow human beings and a remarkable ability to share his down-to-earth insights with others, in speaking and in writing.

He seemed to glide across a room, often removed his dark-rimmed glasses and pondered awhile before speaking, had a cat-ate-the-cream smile, a twinkle in his eye and a dry wit.

Robert J. (Bob) Baker of Elkhart, Ind., was a man with his finger on the pulse of everyday life who possessed deep love for his fellow human beings and a remarkable ability to share his down-to-earth insights with others, in speaking and in writing.

Now the clack of his trusty typewriter—he never did join the computer age—and voice are silent. Bob failed to recover from a cerebral hemorrhage and died the evening of Feb. 19 at Greencroft Healthcare in Goshen, Ind., at age 85.

I was saddened to learn of the demise of an amazing man whose words and actions definitely influenced my life's direction.

In 1963, this freshly minted high school graduate was unsure what might be next—college (not likely) or continuing the manual labor that provided a few shekels to keep my car on the road and enhance my social life.

I sweated away that summer working on neighbor Abe Landis' 12,000-layer poultry farm. One fateful day, I sat down on the egg cart and penned some lines of poetry, a freewheeling conversation with God that I titled "A Graduate's Prayer."

I submitted the piece to the "Youth's Christian Companion," a weekly take-home paper for Mennonite young people published in Scottdale, Pa. The article appeared on the front page of the May 31, 1964, issue as I was completing my freshman year at then Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Va.

Unexpectedly, I received a two-page, typed letter from Robert J. Baker dated Sept. 5, 1964—I still have the letter—responding to my piece. I recognized the name from Bob's frequent byline in the "YCC" and other denominational papers.

"Your prayer in the 'Companion' mentions such things as 'talents,' 'finances,' 'God's will,' etc.," Bob wrote. "As a person interested in writing for Christian publications, I would say that this is a field where one can serve the Lord. ... By now, you may know more about your life's work. Whatever that work is, give some consideration as to whether the Lord might be asking you to do some writing on the side. I can't afford to write for a living, not with five children and the world of the freelancer being a cold, cruel one. ... If you have interest in writing, if you have talent along this line and are willing to work at it (little good writing is done without some sweat and tears), then the Lord may want to use you in this manner. I feel strongly that writing is one area where some of us are expected to serve."

Looking back, I credit this "presumptuous" (Bob's word) communique from Bob—along with encouragement from a high school English teacher, Pearl Schrack, Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) English professor Omar Eby and my parents—with steering me toward the writing/journalism field.

One week after graduating from EMU in 1967, I began my first "real" job as a writer-editor, primarily doing publicity for the voluntary service program at Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart.

I don't think it mere happenstance that my wife and I began attending the same congregation in Elkhart as Bob, Belmont Mennonite Church.

Bob and I connected immediately; he became a friend, guide and mentor to me during our four years there. We encouraged each other, commiserated over rejection slips from editors, accused each other of stealing article ideas and prayed for each other. He also cajoled me for owning a bright red VW Beetle convertible and for listening to rock music (WLS, Chicago) and for having the audacity to play songs such as "Wings of a Dove" in church.

While at Belmont, I started a monthly church newsletter, "Intersect," and invited Bob to be a columnist. He accepted and wrote "Seth's Korner," assuming the guise of a crotchety but sharp-witted curmudgeon who kuldn't spel rite.

The column was soon picked up by *Gospel Herald*, the Mennonite Church's official weekly magazine, but eventually was dropped as readers protested his atrocious spelling and even more outrageous commentary on church life.

Bob didn't give up but resurfaced later in the same publication as "Menno B. Hurd."

Bob's livelihood came from teaching, which gave him plenty of fodder for his freelance work. He taught junior high science in Elkhart city schools from 1947 to 1987. He was an amateur beekeeper and philatelist (Bob often enclosed stamps in his letters to me, telling me to "use them as a bookmark in my Bible") and volunteered with several community service organizations.

"Bob Baker was special. He taught me in eighth grade science as a 13-year-old the last year before he retired in 1986-87," says Ryan Miller, today the news director for Mennonite Mission Network.

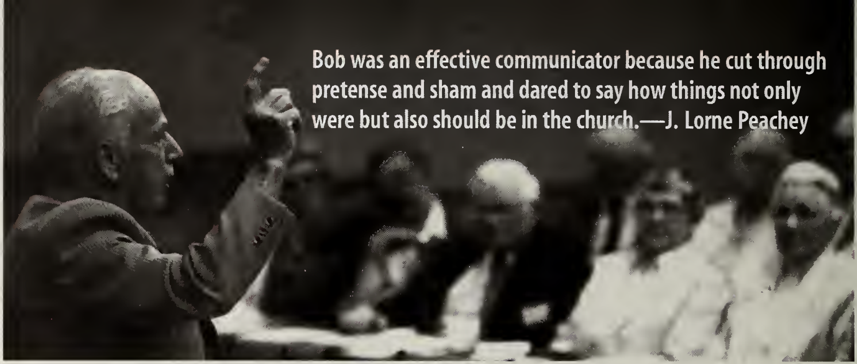
"I'd see him at Pierre Moran Branch Library where I worked in high school, and he'd check in on my progress," Ryan says. "Always the teacher, he would send me small notes from his manual typewriter, commenting on stories or columns I'd written. His comments were encouraging and expressed pride that one of his students was making his way in the world. Few of my teachers have tried to stay in contact with me like he did, and not a single one has so consistently gone out of his way to offer support and encouragement."

Few of my teachers have tried to stay in contact with me like he did, and not a single one has so consistently gone out of his way to offer support and encouragement.

—Ryan Miller

In everyday settings, Bob was quiet and introverted, but something clicked when he got in front of a group to speak. I never saw anyone lead a Sunday school class like he did, blending practical and insightful input with vigorous pupil-teacher

Continued on page 10



Bob was an effective communicator because he cut through pretense and sham and dared to say how things not only were but also should be in the church.—J. Lorne Peachey

Pupil-teacher interaction: Bob Baker speaks on retirement at the second annual Virginia Mennonite Conference seminar on aging.

Continued from page 9

interaction. He knew the material inside and out. If someone in the class offered a comment that may not have been all that helpful or even relevant to the topic, Bob was able to take it and make it sound like that person had just unlocked the mystery of the Trinity.

Baker wrote a column, "If I Were Teaching the Lesson," from 1965 to 1999 in *Builder*, a magazine for teachers in the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. Those times I was called upon to teach I relied heavily on his column.

Retired EMU history professor Gerald R. Brunk recalls Bob holding a workshop at Weavers Mennonite Church west of Harrisonburg on teaching children.

"One of his illustrations for good and evil was black and white," Gerald says. "Afterward, I suggested to him that in a situation where black children were present it might not be appropriate. Bob responded that he had never given that a thought and was grateful to me for pointing that out. He later sent me a letter, which I still have, again thanking me for what I said. Every time I saw him after that he would remind me of what I had taught him."

For a portion of our time at Belmont, I co-led a Sunday school class largely comprised of students from Goshen (Ind.) College who made the 12-mile trip to Elkhart every week.

One Sunday, I invited Bob to talk about his experience as a noncombatant Army medic during the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944. At one point, he pulled out the actual helmet he wore on active duty. It had several indentations where shrapnel had hit. "That helmet undoubtedly saved my life," he said.

Bob later wrote a peace pamphlet entitled "Is There a Middle Way?" asking whether military service, even as a noncombatant, was compatible with his Christian faith. His answer from experience was no.

From 1979 to 1996, Bob wrote a column for the former *Christian Living* magazine reflecting on the passages of life and retirement. A collection of these columns, "County Road 13," was published by Herald Press in 1990.

"Bob Baker was one of the most effective and well-liked writers I had the privilege of working with as an editor," says J. Lorne Peachey, who edited *Christian Living* and later *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite.*

"The manuscripts he sent me ... were usually funny, always self-effacing, often tongue-in-cheek—and always too long," Lorne says. "While he accepted my cutting and editing, he never did come to like it, and every time we'd meet he'd make sure to tell me I had cut some of his best writing."

In addition to the collection of columns, Bob was the author of four other Herald Press books: *Second Chance, God Healed Me, Insect Parables* and *I'm Listening, Lord, Keep Talking.*

After leaving Elkhart for Harrisonburg in the summer of 1971, I stayed in touch with Bob. We corresponded back and forth, and his annual family Christmas letter was always a riot. Although our paths crossed several times over the years, I had not seen him in some time when word came that Bob had suffered a stroke and was in intensive care in a South Bend hospital.

I had just dropped a "thinking of you" card in the mail to the Bakers, telling Bob that while he might be ready for eternity he was needed a bit longer here on Earth. I guess God had other plans, which from a temporal point of view we're not able to perceive or understand.

Bob leaves his wife of 58 years, Anna Mae (Moyer) Baker, three sons, two daughters, 16 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren and an appreciative congregation where he worshiped and served faithfully for decades.

"Bob was an effective communicator because he cut through pretense and sham and dared to say how things not only were but also should be in the church," says Lorne. "He loved God, he loved the church and he loved to honor both through writing."

Jim Bishop is public information officer at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., a freelance writer, columnist, radio announcer and photographer.

A quilt evokes a family's history.

Grandma Emma

Grandma Emma's quilt

by Roberta J. Albrecht

Where there is no vision, the people perish.
—Proverbs 29:18

My daughter Emma found it stuffed in the back of a closet. "Mom," she said, "it's ripped and needs mending, but there's no doubt. It's one of Grandma Albrecht's quilts."

This is how I inherited an important piece of family history and how I found myself reading our story as I stitched, tied and cut new pieces to replace the irreparable old. I've learned a great deal about quilt-making and the labor of love involved. My fingers have been pricked and my patience tested. But also my vision has sharpened as I've rediscovered our past. Like a book, the quilt becomes many pages, each patch meaning as much as I can recall. Unlike a book, the pages come in no certain order. Nevertheless I am learning to read it.

One particular patch is from a red-plaid dress Grandma wore in the 1950s. I have a photograph of her with her siblings on the farm built by my great-great-grandfather in 1863. That was an important year because in 1863 the North won victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, and in 1863 Christian Albrecht built a farm.

There Grandma Emma stands with Minnie and Elsie, who also married Mennonite boys. I am fortunate to have this photograph, as well as a family history written and revised several times. The combination of these three—Grandmother's quilt, the photograph, the book—allows me to make connections I otherwise might not. The Albrecht history helps me link the red-plaid pieces in the quilt with the photograph of her standing by Christian's home. Studying the quilt now is a way of "reading" my family then.

Christian came to America in 1836, when he was only 15. Named after his father, he was the ninth and youngest child. His mother and father decided to leave Germany when it became clear that compulsory military training threatened their sons. Jacob had been excused as a provider but not the rest. So the father packed off his family, all 21 of them, to a place where they could practice pacifism in peace.

I wish I could have been inside young Christian's head that April day when the *Orion* sailed from Bremen. The grownups may have been apprehensive, but surely he was excited about living in a land 60 years young. He arrived in New York Harbor on June 18, then traveled up the Hudson River, across the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes to Fort Dearborn (now Chicago). From there he traveled by ox team and wagon to Hennepin on the Illinois River, where the John Burkey family, who had settled there years before, welcomed his family.

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At first he behaved like a good Mennonite lad, doing what was expected. He married the right girl (Katherine Rouggy) at the right age (27) in September 1848. But a few months later, when he heard that in California gold nuggets were just waiting to be found, he yearned to travel again. (Perhaps, like Tolkien's hobbit, he had a few drops of "fairy blood" in his veins.) At any rate, on March 1, 1849, he left his wife with her folks and set out for California with five other men. They followed the Mormon Trail to Salt Lake City, then the desert, then the mountains. They arrived at Sutters Fort before Thanksgiving.

Meanwhile, from 1846 to 1848, the United States had been involved in the Mexican War. Some called it "Polk's unjust war," just an excuse to steal Texas and California. Thoreau railed, saying the people never would have consented had they been given a voice. Lincoln, a junior congressman, scowled, spoke out against it, but could not do much else. Little did he know that this war was providing training for the next. Throughout both wars, as conscientious objectors, the Albrechts worked hard to realize their dream.

In 1850, Christian came home, traveling by boat most of the way. He had a touch of malaria (The return trip through the Isthmus of Panama had been unhealthful.) and no gold. (The cost of living had been high.) But Katherine had a gift: John Christian, born Nov. 1, 1849, exactly eight months after he had left home.

Now alert, the boy ventured to make eye contact. The Brave glared back, then stared off into space. The tension mounted. How to endure?

Thereafter, my great-great-grandfather seems to have settled down. In 1863, while Abraham Lincoln was giving Ulysses Grant supreme command of the Union army (explaining, "He fights!"), and in 1865, while Lincoln was urging the nation to bind up its wounds, Christian was building his farm.

The red-plaid patch in Grandmother's quilt is my link with this farm and his son. He must have enjoyed telling the lad stories of exotic places. And the boy seems to have had some adventures of his own. One day, as John and his father were on their way to the mill in Tiskilwa, the boy had a terrible fright.

I should pause for a moment to tell you about Tiskilwa. The pink print patch on Grandma's quilt reminds me of the town where she lived after the death of Grandpa Jonas, John Christian's eldest son, in 1936. This bit of pink comes from a dress I used to wear when visiting her on Sundays.

Many of my best memories come from these visits. Sometimes in the summer I stayed an entire week, learning how to live without a television. I slept in her cozy attic, observed the progress of her quilts, and appointed myself caretaker of the strawberry patch. The bit of pink cloth is not really important, except as a mnemonic device. "The boy had a terrible fright."

One day, sometime in the 1850s, Christian Albrecht's wagon lumbered past an Indian village on its way to the mill in Tiskilwa. Little John Christian was riding in the back, sleepy from the monotonous sideways roll. Then he felt it. Something had changed. A young Brave was squatting by his side. Neither could speak the other's language. What did this mean?

Now alert, the boy ventured to make eye contact. The Brave glared back, then stared off into space. The tension mounted. How to endure? (Our history doesn't tell.) Perhaps he remembered the 23rd Psalm as he fingered a buckeye seed, trying to keep calm. At any rate, our history tells, he was more than relieved when the Brave jumped off and strolled away without a backward glance. He had simply wanted a ride.

Like his father, John Christian married the right girl at the right age. (He was 26.) In 1875, he built his own home one mile south of his father's farm. This is where his seven children, including Grandpa Jonas, were born. When Jonas married Emma and inherited the farm, he made wine in the basement, a practice generally shunned. (Perhaps there was some "California" blood in his soul, too.)

Grandpa did not live long. After an appendectomy, he refused to rest—"have to get back to the fields"—and that is what killed him. Then Grandma managed the farm, and my father Robert worked it. In 1945, a few months before Japan surrendered to the Allied forces, I was born.

I gathered eggs in John Christian's henhouse and walnuts in his grove. I daydreamed from my perch in his maple tree and picked mulberries in his orchard. Grandma sometimes came out from Tiskilwa, bringing strawberries in June and applesauce in November. She often left with bits and pieces of cloth for her quilts.

Here, for example, is a patch from my mother's only attempt to sew a dress with gussets. She cut the fabric. That was all. Naturally, Grandma, who looked upon waste as sinful, rescued it. Here is a patch from a dress she wore for her 75th birthday. (She lived until 1980, five months short of 100.) And what isn't here is Benny's ghost.

Benny was John Christian's son, born in 1886. When Elizabeth was pregnant with Benny, she fell from a buggy. Some months later she gave birth to an "unnatural" child. In those days there were no social programs to assist. This was a great test of faith for my grandparents. They did the best they could—providing Benny's physical needs, praying with and for him, treating him with kindness—leaving the rest to God.

As he grew older and stronger, he became more difficult to control. Poor Benny spent the last of his 18 years in the attic (which someday would be my room). At first, when little Elsie brought up his food, she was afraid. He was also afraid, in ways more profound than she could understand. She learned not to fear, soothing him with hymns and gentle touches. In this way, Benny seems to have learned compassion. At least that is what my mother thinks.

Please understand that I want to believe that I do not believe in ghosts. But my mother remembers Benny's visit once when she was feeling low. She was weeping in bed, and Benny came to soothe her. She knew by the wetness of his gentle kiss that this was no dream. Neither was she afraid of him. (After I heard this tale, I began to check my closet, far back into the dark corners, before going to bed. I found several interesting things but never Benny.)

Now John C.'s house is gone. My father burned it down in 1967, making way for the one he would build. I shall never forget the solitary tear that trickled down Grandma's cheek when she watched the house where her children were born disappear. Her quilt, which I am reading right now, reminds me of this and more. It provokes sorrow. But it also inspires faith.

Roberta J. Albrecht is a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in New York.

Tasting it

by Jean Janzen

That brief glory—the feeding
of five thousand, then utter
fatigue, disciples helpless
in their boat. Days we lean

against the wind, drenched, sore
and hungry again, begging for
a miracle. And there it is standing
beside us, even if we drown.

I think of Roberta dying,
how the morning sun walked
over her bed, and she awoke,
asked for breakfast.

How she sat up and filled
her mouth with melon
that last day, her eyes burning
as she tasted the glory.

How she took it
with her. How it stays.

Jean Janzen lives in Fresno, Calif.

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George Kuttab

iStock Photo

Family

God is creating a new family.

by Freeman J. Miller

January 24 will never be the same for me. On that date in 2005 my father died. Exactly one year later, one of my spiritual fathers, Pastor George Kuttab, died. On Jan. 28 in both years I stood before two vastly different audiences paying tribute. Reflecting on those two audiences reveals a lot about my life and about our heavenly Father.

When I first met Frosina Kuttab, I felt like I had stepped back into the pages of Egermeir's *Bible Story Book*, which I devoured as an Amish child in central Ohio many years ago. Her traditional Palestinian dress and warm smile evoked images of Elizabeth or Mary in the Christmas stories. When I learned that she and her husband had raised their seven children in the real Bethlehem (as opposed to Bethlehem, Pa., with its annual Christmas pilgrimage), the images converged perfectly. And when I realized they were moving in with their son Sam's family on our block of Carlisle Street, it brought us special joy. It was as if God was putting another colorful piece of glass into the mosaic of our multifaceted lives.

It was as if God was putting another colorful piece of glass into the mosaic of our multifaceted lives.

reasures

How could a Palestinian family and former rural Ohioans feel so at home in the middle of a black, inner-city neighborhood? Ephesians 3 gives us a clue: God is growing a family like this all around the world, and we're adopted in by sheer grace. With Paul, "I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name" (vv. 14-15, NIV). Paul wrote this after he had explained what God went through to bring those of us "far away" and those "very near" into the same faith family, breaking down centuries of hostilities, barriers and dividing walls (2:14). And just before exclaiming in holy jubilation, "There is one body and one Spirit … one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (4:4-6. NIV). What a Father! What a family! And all beginning to take shape on our little block of North Philadelphia. It reminds me of Peterson's paraphrase of John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood" (*The Message*).

The Kuttab family is truly remarkable. (So are many other "new" Mennonites in Philadelphia I could write about.) Six of their seven children attended Messiah College in Grantham, Pa., and are scattered around the world, all making an impact in their own way. Sam is a local businessman here in our neighborhood. Jonathan may be the only Palestinian Christian pacifist attorney working for peace in Jerusalem and Jordan (often interviewed on the world news). His brother Daoud (David) also lives in Jerusalem, where he has an Arabic version of *Sesame Street* running on his own TV station, where Arabic and Jewish children learn to become friends and play together. He also anchored the first live broadcast of the first-ever Palestinian Parliament. He helped prompt a worldwide campaign for democracy in Palestine. Others in the extended family hold influential roles in church and civic life across the country. One son-in-law is lead pastor of a Lutheran church in Brooklyn. Matriarch Frosina is a midwife and has brought many young lives into the world on both sides of the pond, including grandchildren numbers 20, 21 and 22.

Our two families have become intricately intertwined for time and eternity. When we attend a family event at the Kuttab household, it's like a big family reunion, with stuffed grape leaves, maglube, many plates piled high with savory Mideast favorites now our favorites as well. It takes a long, leisurely evening to properly enjoy it. In the midst of the feasting and reminiscing about our children, grandchildren and mutual friends over the years, tears and laughter flow freely as stories and memories are shared. We have begun to feel the pain of Palestinians pushed from their family homes and lands for no reason other than being Palestinian. We know that every story from Jerusalem today has at least two sides, if not more, just as every story from North Philadelphia and every story from each of our Asian and Hispanic churches does.

To be part of God's new humanity is the richest treasure on earth and in heaven.

This snapshot provides only one tiny glimpse into the rich kaleidoscope or family tapestry God is weaving in his new community in the city. I could share dozens more of such personal vignettes that result from Christian family life in the city, drawing from close friendships literally from around the world. To be part of God's new humanity is the richest treasure on earth and in heaven. Who would want to trade it for anything else? I miss both my father and George Kuttab as spiritual giants who have left a legacy I hope to treasure and pass on to the next generations. Let's let God's family shape our families. Our family can be your family.

Freeman J. Miller is bishop of the Mennonite Churches of Philadelphia (Lancaster Mennonite Conference).

together sharing all of
Christ
with all of creation

PART 8 OF AN EIGHT-PART SERIES

Finding community in an unlikely place

by Bethany Keener

For many people, "homeless" is a dirty word. It's a word often automatically associated with the stigma of mental illness or substance abuse; a word that strips dignity and makes us want to look away.

Not so for the four young adults participating in the DEO (Discipleship, Encounter, Outreach) program in Denver. Among people who are pushed aside and forgotten by the public, Loren Bontrager, Aisha Entz, Lena Sweet and Daniel W.* have found community working for local agencies that support those who have little.

What is the church doing? Why isn't there a dent?
—Aisha Entz

It starts with the support of congregations that send participants to serve through DEO, a partner program of Mennonite Mission Network. Their first two months are spent studying the Bible, worshiping and developing spiritually in a community rooted in Christ.

During their eight months of outreach, a broader community—religious groups, institutions, nonprofit organizations and hundreds of generous individuals—supports the agencies they work for. These pieces form a safety net for those who have nowhere else to turn.

According to the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative point-in-time survey, 10,268 people were homeless on the night of Jan. 24, 2005, in a city with an estimated population of 556,835.

Robin Hagedorn is one of them. A year earlier her financial situation forced her to sell the house where she and her father both grew up, a house she had hoped to pass on to her daughter one day. Without a job, leasing an apartment didn't last long.

Robin found a friend who offered her a place to sleep at night and a community of support at the Gathering Place, Denver's only day shelter for women and children who, according to Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, make up half the city's homeless. Without Gathering Place's support, Hagedorn does not know where she would be.

DEO volunteer Lena Sweet of Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Buffalo, N.Y., says that sense of support is intentional. "The staff, the women who come here and the rich suburban women donors—we're all the same. We're all looking to be accepted," she says.

The day shelter's philosophy is to accept everyone for who they are. It requires nothing from women in return for services like showers, laundry facilities, phone use and meals in an attempt to foster a sense of community for up to 300 women each day.

Myrtle Thomas comes to the Gathering Place for writing classes and card making, but most of all for the company of the other women. "When you come in and they know you, it makes you feel like somebody. Like you're important," she says.

DenUM (Denver Urban Ministry), where Daniel W. of Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church in Hillsboro, Kan., volunteers, also has a high regard for dignity. DenUM's food pantry gives away 300,000 pounds of food each year, but director William Lewis says they throw away quite a bit of food as well.

"There's no dignity in giving expired food," William says. During his months at DenUM, Daniel created a system for sorting and storing donated food.

Daniel has seen the faith and thankfulness of the people DenUM serves. And his faith has grown in this community as he has learned how to "trust God to give me strength to interact with people in a way that gives them dignity."

At the Samaritan House Clinic, Loren Bontrager of Clinton Frame Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., calms a man whose anxiety about an upcoming surgery has sent him into near hysterics.

Steve Keener

Sense of support: Robin Hagendorn (left) and Lena Sweet have become friends through The Gathering Place.

Somehow he gets others to smile as they take their seats in the waiting area. In the hallway, he greets some of the 300 residents by their first names.

Program manager Lisa Thompson says the collaboration of Denver's medical community keeps the clinic running. The University of Colorado sends volunteer nursing students. Saint Joseph Hospital provides volunteer doctors, physician's assistants and resident students.

Survival also takes trust in what Thompson calls a "higher power." Just when Thompson worries that their supplies will run out, local churches and other charitable organizations pitch in.

When West Africans come to Metro CareRing, where Aisha Entz of First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., volunteers, to pick up food boxes or for referrals. She uses her linguistic skills. "The best part of my job is when I can make someone smile when they hear I'm from Africa," she says.

Having spent her formative years in Orodara, Burkina Faso, Aisha speaks French and Jula, a West African business language. Aisha sees value in being there as a "sounding board" at a support agency for those who don't have other places to go.

Yet there is more to be done—and Aisha holds the church accountable. She points out that the church she's familiar with is a middle- and even upper-class church. "Christianity holds no bounds, no matter how wealthy you are. The church should be there for the down-and-outers.

"The situation looks so hopeless," Aisha says. "What is the church doing? Why isn't there a dent?"

These young adults will bring their experiences and questions to their home communities. Del Hershberger, director of Christian Service for Mission Network, says programs like DEO allow young people to discover how God is at work in the world, then use their gifts for God's mission. Additionally, the last two months of the program send them to their home churches to share what they have learned about God's love and healing through communities of faith.

The Gathering Place has been like a church for Lena this year. Within that community there is no unspoken standard of who is acceptable, no dress code or behavior expectations, and no facade. "You can come at your worst," Lena says. And some do.

To her, this is what the gospel is all about: building a community based on acceptance of all, simply because they belong to God.

* Name withheld due to security issues.

Bethany Keener is a writer for Mennonite Mission Network.

'God is not just something in the sky'

The Thailand RAD (Reaching and Discipling) team has had troubles this year. One member of the team lost her father the day the group landed in Bangkok for language study. Another had emergency surgery. One dealt with family issues of injury and faithfulness back home. Several felt assaulted by physical or spiritual forces.

If the quartet of young adults had not stayed together, they say, they all may have gone home. Instead, they remain in Borabu, Thailand, focused on each other and on the Lord.

Destiny Peshina of Goshen, Ind., quickly identified the source of her strength through her own struggles: "These three people [the RAD team] and God."

RAD, a partner program of Mennonite Mission Network, offers three months of discipleship training and six to eight months of outreach, this year with mission workers in Thailand, Argentina and Sweden. The experience creates an enduring community among team members.

Two years ago, Thailand team leader Rex Brashear of Amburgey, Ky., served with RAD in Macau with a team he now calls his family. He said the support of those former team members, as well as the love among his current team, has helped him focus on God's presence in Thailand.

"I have seen God move in powerful ways in the lives of my teammates," Brashear says. "God is not just something in the sky. God is working in these people's hearts."—*Ryan Miller*

Where are the women?

Marty Lehman is director of financial development for Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA.

While I was talking with a male about a financial matter, he said, "You really understand these things." I had to wonder if he would have made that comment if I weren't a woman.

While attending the Women in Philanthropy Conference, sponsored by the Indiana School of Philanthropy, last year I learned that

- 58 percent of the world's wealth is owned by the United States, and 54 percent of that is owned by women, largely due to the fact that women live longer than men;
- women make up 80 percent of the world's consumers and own 50 percent of the food;
- in the next 40 years, $4 trillion will transfer to women;
- women are change agents—they make things happen.

At the conference I heard about a research project that looked at the different leadership styles of men and women. While we know we are individuals and have our own personalities and ways of working, there are some general differences between the genders. For example, according to this study, roughly 60 percent of men fall into the individualistic style, which means they emphasize status and independence, do one thing at a time, give information only as needed and "step think" (compartmentalize and prioritize). Roughly 60 percent of women fall into a relational style, which is defined as emphasizing connection and interdependence, sharing information, doing many things at once and "connecting the dots."

How does all this apply to me, a woman in a leadership role in Mennonite Church USA's Executive Leadership? It is obvious we are a denomination with male leadership. All our churchwide organizations are led by males—although two are underrepresented racial-ethnic. By summer, with the retirement of Lee Snyder, all our colleges/universities and seminaries will be led by men. Only three of our 21 area conference leaders are women. Nineteen of our 73 Mennonite Health Service Alliance organizations have women CEOs.

All our churchwide organizations are led by males. All our colleges/universities and seminaries are led by men. Only three of our 21 area conference leaders are women.

Why do we have so few women in administrative leadership roles in Mennonite Church USA organizations? Is it because there are so many men that women have not felt comfortable in this male-dominated world? Or is it because women have not stepped forward and applied for leadership roles?

Several years ago, I was talking to a friend who was a vice president in her organization. She said her organization was looking for a CEO. I encouraged her to apply for the position. I quickly got a long list of reasons why she was not qualified for the position and would never be hired. At the same time, I was talking to a male friend who was applying for a CEO position. He was telling me all the reasons why he was qualified, never mentioning any reasons he might not be qualified. The contrast struck me.

In my experience, women are much harder on themselves when it comes to their skill levels and their abilities. They are quick to look to their deficiencies rather than their strengths. Thus they, too, quickly eliminate themselves for positions they should be considering—positions for which they'd be hired.

I have been in leadership roles for the past 19 years—everything from middle management to CEO. For the most part I've received great acceptance by my male co-workers and peers. However, too often I am the only woman in a meeting. God has given each of us different gifts and talents. Some God has called to be pastors, some to be businesspeople, some to be teachers. I also believe God calls us to work in administrative roles for our denominational organizations.

I encourage the women of Mennonite Church USA to be change agents. I encourage you to help change our Mennonite organizations as together we joyfully follow Jesus into the world.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Independence Day**—Dee Dee Baldwin
- **Women making peace**—Jeanette Harder
- **A lesson at the food pantry**—Sheri Hartzler

Phalita Nari

Hendro (left) and Mugiyem, a Mennonite couple in Pundong, Indonesia, fled their house as it collapsed in a May 27 earthquake. They are currently living in a tent and receiving food and supplies from humanitarian groups, including Indonesian Mennonite churches.

Relief efforts begin after May 27 quake

All families in the Pundong Mennonite church lose their homes, three die.

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck the Indonesian island of Java on May 27, causing more than 5,100 deaths and leaving hundreds of thousands of people homeless, according to the Indonesian government. Indonesian Mennonites and humanitarian organizations are assisting earthquake survivors with support from Mennonite Central Committee. MCC is appealing to its constituents for $265,000 to support the relief and recovery work of partner organizations in Java.

Muria Christian Church in Indonesia, a Mennonite conference known by its Indonesian acronym GKMI, collected food, bottled water and clothing from six of its congregations after the earthquake. On May 28, MCC helped transport the items to a GKMI church in Pundong, a rural community where most houses collapsed in the quake (see photo above and sidebar article).

"The people in the village were glad to see us," said Victor Sensenig, an MCC worker who helped transport the aid. "Even though it was raining, there was a long line of people helping pass the food from the trucks to our sister GKMI church, where it was stored. They said 14 people had died in their village, their homes collapsing on them while they slept."

Since the earthquake, Indonesian Mennonite churches have sent about 20 volunteers per day to Pundong, where they staff community kitchens, recover items from collapsed houses and set up tents for newly homeless families.

MCC initially sent $13,700 for the relief work of partner organizations, including GKMI. MCC is appealing for funds to assist in distributing food to affected families, rebuilding houses and helping survivors deal with emotional trauma.

Although central Java is predominantly Muslim, the region is also home to the majority of Indonesia's Mennonites. Indonesia has three Mennonite conferences with a combined membership of more than 87,000.

"Unlike the tsunami, this disaster happened in an area where there are Indonesian Mennonite congregations," says Jeanne Jantzi, an MCC country representative for Indonesia. "This is an important time to support the relief efforts of the churches to people of all faiths who live in the affected area."—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

Three Mennonites among 5,100 earthquake deaths

All 45 families of a Mennonite congregation in central Java lost their homes in the earthquake that struck Indonesia on May 27. An adult and two children from the 127-member Pundong church were among thousands killed by the magnitude 6.3 quake. The three died along with three Roman Catholics who shared a house with church members, according to officials in the region. Indonesian Mennonite leader Paulus Widjaja reports that the 45 homeless families from the Pundong church are living in tents near the damaged church building.

Of 29 Pundong church members who suffered injuries, seven were badly hurt, including Pastor Daniel Soebari, whose house collapsed before he could escape. Soebari, who had been hospitalized, was later moved to the Mennonite church in Yogyakarta, where his treatment for a leg fracture is continuing, Widjaja says. Another church member, Widjaja says, lay with thousands of other patients in a public hospital parking lot in Yogyakarta for more than a week. The 24-year-old woman, who had sustained a serious bone fracture in the quake, was brought on June 4 to a Mennonite hospital at Kudus, about 120 miles north of Yogyakarta, Widjaja says.—*Robert Rhodes of* Mennonite Weekly Review

The Agony of Gaia (Mother Earth)
a sculpture about Mountaintop Removal
by Kentucky artist - Jeff Chapman-Crane

Everett J. Thomas

At MCC's Annual General Meeting June 9-10, Jeff Chapman-Crane stands beside his sculpture protesting the removal of mountaintops in the coal fields of Kentucky. The sculptor's wife, Sharman Chapman-Crane, is one of 15 local service workers in MCC Appalachia and the Serving with Appalachian People program.

Generosity of the church pushes MCC

Expense budget for Mennonite Central Committee will be 8.2 percent larger.

Sometimes it is difficult to spend money as quickly as the church gives it. That is what Mennonite Central Committee is discovering. Hosted by MCC Great Lakes in Shipshewana, Ind., June 9-10, members of Mennonite Central Committee's binational board responded to fiscal year-end numbers by adopting a budget that projects $43,691,147 in cash expenses before March 31, 2007. That will be an increase of more than $10 million in just two years (see box page 21).

According to Ken Langeman, MCC's controller, several factors combined to give MCC a record financial year that ended on March 31: responses to natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina and the December 2005 tsunami, gains in the exchange rate between Canadian and U.S. dollars, increased contributions for food aid in places such as Zambia and the Sudan, and significant increases in sales through MCC thrift shops and Ten Thousand Villages stores. Relief sales were one area that did not show an increase in income.

"Relief sales are kind of flat," said Dave Worth, MCC's resource network director. "The houses against hunger don't seem to be doing quite as well." Board member Tim Penner said that relief sale income would have declined in the past year without the addition of several new relief sales.

MCC policy requires that three to five months of net assets be available for its operations so core programs and partnerships do not end abruptly. However, record income of the past year pushed the benchmark to nearly six months of income. So the board adopted a three-year plan that will reduce net assets by $2 million. The core expense budget during the next year will be 8.2 percent higher than last year.

What kind of connection is there between partnerships and relationships?
—Nancy Heisey

Congolese Mennonites feel abandoned

Even with record levels of assets to distribute, some relationships and activities are struggling. Mennonite World Conference leaders joined the meeting to talk about how the two organizations relate to other Mennonites around the world—especially in Africa.

By 2007, MCC will reduce its staff in the Democratic Republic of Congo to one representative. Congolese Mennonites represent 20 percent of the approximately 1 million Mennonites and Anabaptists around the world.

"The general perception in the Congo is that it is being abandoned [by the international community]," MWC's associate executive director Pakisa Tshimika said. "The war was known by everybody. There's been no official condemnation ... even by the churches, right or wrong. Those [whom the Congolese] used to call brothers and sisters, they don't see them anymore."

MWC president Nancy Heisey said that MCC and MWC need to talk together when such relationships change.

"What kind of connection is there between partnerships and relationships?" Heisey asked. "We continue to be in relationship with churches that feel abandoned [by the world community]. We need to be in conversation about 'relationship maintenance.'"

Mennonite World Conference leaders say Congolese feel abandoned; Olympic champion helps with HIV/AIDS; Dueck follows Harder as board chair.

No risk-taking for 85-year-old

The 2006 Annual General Meeting marked Robb Davis' first anniversary as the executive director for MCC binational.

"It's been one year," said Davis. "It's been a lot of joy punctuated by moments of terror."

In his first report to the board, Davis characterized MCC as an "amazingly powerful organization. We can be small and big. We can be local and international."

Davis also noted that MCC is 85 years old.

"There are not many 85-year-olds who will take risks," Davis said. "We are risk-averse. Somehow we use the systems that have grown up in these 85 years to paralyze ourselves."

Davis said there are two ways to confront this reality: Combine the giftedness of MCC's 12 parts and partner with other church organizations—such as colleges and universities.

Olympic champion joins MCC Canada

The binational board also received reports from the two country MCCs. MCC Canada executive director Donald Peters highlighted two Canadian activities: a change in government policy for which it lobbied, and a new relationship with Cindy Klassen, who won five gold medals at the Winter Olympics.

Until 2005, Canadian law required that 90 percent of Canadian-funded food aid be used to purchase Canadian commodities. Through the Canadian Food Grains Bank, MCC Canada lobbied the government to reduce that percentage to 50 percent so Canadian contributions could be used to purchase commodities from within the countries where MCC wants to provide relief. Doing so helps those regional economies.

Peters also used his personal connection to Klassen—whom he had as a student in high school—to use her fame for MCC's program. He first approached her parents with a proposal for Cindy to "lend her voice to the poor of the world" without any compensation. Eventually Peters met with Klassen and laid out the proposal.

"I think it's an answer to prayer," Klassen said, according to Peters. "I've always wanted to do mission work. Maybe this is the way I can do it."

By the end of June, Klassen will join other MCC staff members on a trip to Ethiopia and Nigeria as part of the HIV/AIDS education program called Generations At Risk.

MCC U.S.

MCC U.S. executive director Rolando Santiago listed the response to Hurricane Katrina as his organization's primary highlight and noted that the experience created a new partnership between Mennonite Disaster Service and MCC U.S. While MDS continues its repair work after a disaster, MCC U.S. will partner in three ways: evacuee assistance, material aid and coordination of Anabaptist and church agencies.

Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite World Conference associate executive secretary Pakisa Tshimika tells Mennonite Central Committee members that Congolese Mennonite feel "abandoned." From left: Karen Klassen Harder, Robb Davis, Amos Stoltzfus and Nancy Heisey

New leader for MCC binational

Karen Klassen Harder, Bluffton, Ohio, presided over her last meeting as chair of Mennonite Central Committee binational board. She resigned for personal reasons, citing the change in her husband Jim's employment (now president of Bluffton University) and the needs of their young family. Former high school principal and teacher Ron Dueck, Winnipeg, was elected the new chair. Dueck had been serving as chair of MCC Canada and is a member of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Dueck

Mennonite Central Committee Activity

FY end	2005	2006	2007
Total income	$38,990,775	$43,352,005	$38,359,047
Total expenses	32,904,318	39,760,366	43,691,147
Change in net assets	6,086,457	3,591,639	(5,332,101)

Churches influence post-apartheid work

College crew documents realities; Mission Network will distribute their video.

South Africans continue to pick their way through the debris of apartheid that devastated the country for half a century.

During Goshen (Ind.) College's May term, three students and three advisors sorted through the material they filmed during their South Africa spring break trip from Feb. 23 to March 6, choosing clips to show how churches help shape post-apartheid society.

The students, part of the college's Peace and Justice Journalism Program, produced a 30-minute video with the working title "Dreaming a New South Africa." Mennonite Mission Network will mail this video to Mennonite Church USA congregations later this year.

Pat McFarlane, associate professor of communication at Goshen College, led the trip and says, "The changes happening since the end of apartheid make this a great social experiment unlike that of any other country. I wanted to document those changes, especially in relation to the churches with which Mennonite Mission Network partners."

The changes happening since the end of apartheid [in South Africa] make this a great social experiment unlike that of any other country.
—Pat McFarlane

Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA, assisted with the production of the documentary through a grant and with the collaboration of mission workers in North America and South Africa.

Tom Price, Mission Network's marketing director, served as a consultant for the film team.

"We hope the video will provide the church with some specific examples of how U.S. congregations are currently working with those in South Africa," says Price, "and how they can potentially become involved in international missions. The South African church is a vital part of transforming society at every level."

Way of Life Church, which began meeting in a school classroom in the township of Khayelitsha 11 years ago, impressed James Weber, a sophomore communication major from Reading, Pa., and video team participant. Today the congregation has grown to become a significant, positive presence in the community.

"The church's members were mostly between the ages of 15 and 25, with hardly anyone over 40. This allows for a vibrant service and lots of church ministries," Weber says.

These ministries include leadership training, cell groups, HIV/AIDS education, lifestyle instruction, tutoring, dance and drama classes, and sports.

Way of Life's pastor, Xola Skosana, believes effective youth ministry begins in understanding what attracts young people. "Go into the kinds of places young people go to. Dissect what of those experiences are good, and what are not good. The more we do that, the more young people come. So we've developed a program that is rife with song and dance and drama," Skosana says.

James Weber

Goshen College professor Pat McFarlane (second from right) interviews Cynthia Creamer (in black) and another South African woman while Jonny Meyer, a sophomore from Millersburg, Ind., operates sound equipment.

The filming crew also visited Grace Community Church in Philipstown and Breakthru Church International in Pietermaritzburg. These churches reach out to their communities with ministries similar to those of Way of Life.

Christine and Phil Lindell Detweiler's family moved to Pietermaritzburg last December with Mennonite Mission Network, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and Mennonite Church Canada Witness to help develop social ministries in the three churches visited by the film team. Anna and Joe Sawatzky and their two sons began ministry in Mthatha earlier this year.

Ryan Geist, president of Penta Vision, Inc., of South Bend, Ind., and former Goshen College communications instructor Ed Cundiff, also accompanied the team and provided technical expertise.—*Sheldon Good of Goshen College and Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

Young adults changed by YES terms

Thailand team witnesses baptism of driver whose truck killed missionary.

Five teams of passionate young adults—just back from serving on Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams in Albania, Cambodia, Chile and Thailand and on a Brethren in Christ team in Honduras, filled the Eastern Mennonite Missions meetinghouse for sharing April 28 in Salunga, Pa. They also shared in an EMM chapel May 2 how they saw God transforming lives around the world.

The teams used personal stories, skits and PowerPoint presentations to share their experiences with friends and family members. One pastoral couple, Gary and Anna Miller, had come all the way from Goshen, Ind., to cheer on three young adults from their congregation, Maple City Chapel in Goshen.

"I feel like Moses when he came down off the mountain," said Austin Beachy, Goshen, from the Chile team. "I want people to notice that my face is shining—that I've grown."

All the teams had worked alongside emerging Mennonite or Brethren in Christ congregations overseas. Most had lived with host families.

The Albania and Thailand teams taught English. The Cambodia team worked at renovation projects and in a dormitory for college students. The Honduras team tutored street kids and helped build a school on the edge of a city dump. The Chile team worked with children on the islands around Puerto Montt and built a bathroom.

The initial interactions and language barriers with host families were difficult and stilted.

"But God taught me how to love people creatively—without English," said Becky Blimline from the Albania team.

Justin Zacharias (Thailand team leader) said, "It was an incredible privilege for me to witness what God was doing in the lives of the community we were working in."

There were other highlights—as when the Thailand team witnessed the baptism of several of their friends and also of the man who had driven the truck that killed EMM missionary John Hertzler last summer, and when funds came through to complete a school for children at the city dump in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

When Lindsey Martin moved in with her Albanian host family, the father was an avowed atheist, even though his wife and daughter attended the Mennonite church. But by the time she left, he believed in God.

The Chile team was excited to watch as their host father led an Argentinean family to faith in Christ—and to pray with seven girls who said they wanted to follow Jesus. Most participants echoed the words of Justin Eberly (Cambodia team), "It was very stretching to do things I've never done before."

"It didn't seem like we did very much," said Andy Hoover (Albania team). "But we drank coffee with friends three times a day. It was all about building relationships—inside our English classes and out."

"We're the ones that got blessed," said Becky Blimline (Albania team). "We did a lot of planting, but it's God who grows the seed."

Doreen Ebersole, training director for short-term teams, closed the evening by saying, "I believe God was glorified. I know there were moments when you thought, This is hard. I want to give up. But you persevered, and we're proud of you. … I'm looking at completely different individuals today than I did several months ago. I praise God for the work that is going on within you."
—Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions

Justin Zacharias

Adam Stichter (right) and Daniel Jordan (standing left) teach English in a Thai village school as part of their assignment on the three-member Thailand Youth Evangelism Service team.

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Another skirmish for Vietnamese church

Members of Mennonite congregation in Ho Chi Minh City again arrested.

On May 22, members of the Vietnam Mennonite Church were beaten and arrested during a confrontation with the authorities over renovations they were doing to their church building in Ho Chi Minh City's District Two. Nine were held overnight at the local police station. Six people were released the next day, and Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang and the two others were released a day later.

The church requested prayer for those arrested and asked that the violent actions of the police be denounced.

Pastor Quang, on April 27, submitted a request for a building permit to do temporary repairs to the building, fix the leaking roof and resolve flooding problems. He said they would be doing the work themselves.

On May 8, the local administrative committee granted a building permit with limited authorization. On-site inspection of the property confirmed that the building frequently flooded at high tide and after rains, so Quang was granted permission to raise the level of the foundation and floor by one-half meter and replace the roofing.

Noting that the house was located within Ho Chi Minh's Thu Thiem sector development area and under a reclamation order, the permit specifically stated that "the petitioner is not permitted to change the structure of the building, build or extend the present dimensions."

An observer said that Quang was planning to add a loft to the front section of the building. On the morning of May 22, local authorities cited him for going beyond their approval and asked the group to stop the work.

When the church continued the renovation, the authorities—with support of various police units—converged on the house, beating people and dragging them off to the police station.

Last July, authorities tore down a section of the building they said was built without authorization. The church made repairs to the wall and continued using the building as a church office and training center, their worship center in that area. The building also serves as living quarters for Pastor Quang's family.

The church was ordered by local authorities to close and was repeatedly harassed after Quang was arrested in June 2004 on charges of obstructing police officials. He was sentenced to a three-year prison term but granted amnesty in August 2005. Since his release, the church has been able to meet much more normally.

In the past two years, Vietnam's National Assembly has adopted different religious regulations. However, these changes have been implemented unevenly in different areas, and lack of trust continues between many religious groups and various levels of government.—*Vietnamese Ministries and Mennonite World Conference*

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CALENDAR

Call for proposals. **Mennonite Health Assembly** is seeking workshop proposals for the 2007 Assembly March 29-April 1, 2007, in Pittsburgh. Deadline for submission is July 5, 2006. For details and forms go to https://mhsonline.org/core/fe/public/php/form.list.php or call 574-534-9689.

WORKERS

Hochstedler, Jarvis, ended May 30 as Interim Pastor at Providence Mennonite Church, Montgomery, Ind.

Lehman, Marty, was licensed May 14 for her position as Director of Financial Development for Mennonite Church USA. Licensing took place at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Martz, Robert, ended May 31 as pastor at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Schertz, Mary, was ordained May 14 for her professional work as a professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart. Ordination took place at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Troyer, Janice, was licensed April 23 as transitional youth pastor at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Al-Laty, Leah Noor, May 21, to Amin and Sabah Al-Laty, Sellersville, Pa.

Bartel, Noah Paul, June 3, to Alex and Sheri Rosfeld Bartel, Manhattan, Kan.

Borntrager, Cadeb Asher, April 13, to Clint and Liz Miller Borntrager, Goshen, Ind.

Bermudez, Logan James, March 15, to Brant and Jamie Chisum Bermudez, Phoenix.

Deavers, Grant Robert, May 5, to Mark and Kristi Deavers, Kouts, Ind.

Eash, Natalie Brielle, May 15, to Matt and Velda Lehman Eash, Goshen, Ind.

Falk, Samuel James Roth and Michael Christopher Roth (twins), April 10, to Thom and Susan Roth Falk, Denver, Colo.

Good, Zalia Grace, May 18, to Tim and Amy Good, Weyers Cave, Va.

Graber, Zoe Yoder, May 23, to Philip and Andrea Yoder Graber, W. Chicago, Ill.

Hershey, Cadence Isaac, March 8, to Jason and Kimberlee Vivian Hershey, Washington, D.C.

Honeybone, Jonathan Tyler, May 23, to Stanley and Karin Liechty Honeybone, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Kandel, Austin Lynn, May 26, to Russel and LeAnna Byler Kandel, Berlin, Ohio.

Leinbach, Courtney Faith, May 19, to Rich and Karen Mullet Leinbach, Elkhart, Ind.

Liechty, Isabel Mae, May 24, to Jade and Jill Miller Liechty, Hartville, Ohio.

Morano, Andrew Joseph, April 27, to Leo and Kathryn Siftar Morano, Abington, Pa.

Moyer, Justin Douglas, May 15, to Douglas and Diana Renner Moyer, Sellersville, Pa.

Mummau, Valerie LouAnne, March 28, to Chris and Judy Geissinger Mummau, East Waterford, Pa.

Pressel, Greta Joy, May 12, to Kevin and Deborah Stone-Pressel, Kouts, Ind.

Richer, Seth Allen, May 18, to Chad and Carla Nunnemaker Richer, Elkhart, Ind.

Siegrist, Abigail Katelin, May 21, to Brent and Katrina Mullet Siegrist, Nairobi, Kenya.

Yoder, Eleanor Vernetta, April 20, to Ed and Laura Glick Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.

Yoder, Jeremy D. and Joshua D. (twins), May 5, to Dave and Mae Miller Yoder, Holmesville, Ohio.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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Mennonite Central Committee

"For The Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to Menn-Obits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

MARRIAGES

Baum/Rohrer: Nathaniel Baum, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Briana Rohrer, Manheim, Pa., June 3 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Beck/Gingerich: Sonja Beck, Hebron, Ind., and Blake Gingerich, New York, N.Y., May 13 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts, Ind.

Burkholder/Ross: Julianne Burkholder, Linville, Va., and Joel Ross, Waynesboro, Va., May 14 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Byler/Leatherman: Viola Byler, Fredericksburg, Ohio, and Brandon Leatherman, Millersburg, Ohio, May 20 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Chupp/Hastings: Sarah Chupp, West Unity, Ohio, and Steven Hastings, Dunkirk, Ohio, May 27 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Dubon/Schloneger: Ana Maria Dubon, San Bartolome, Guatemala, and Wendell Schloneger, Orrville, Ohio, May 20 at Orrville Mennonite Church.

Dutcher/Johnson: Andrew Dutcher, Sugarcreek, Ohio, and Annie Johnson, Lititz, Pa., May 7 in an outdoor wedding at the home of the groom's parents, Sugarcreek.

Eby/Weldon: James Eby, Gap, Pa., and Corrie Weldon, Frederick, Md., May 27 at the home of the groom's parents, Gap.

Friesen/Meeks: Kristine Friesen, Denver, Colo., and Trevor Meeks, Columbia, Md., April 2 at Walnut Foundry, Denver.

Godshall/Nelson: Timothy Godshall, Manheim, Pa., and Emilee Nelson, Manheim, May 20 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Phillips/Scherer: Rob Phillips, Orrville, Ohio, and Kelly Scherer, McMurray, Pa., May 20 in McMurray.

DEATHS

Austin, La Verne "Barney", 85, Denver, Colo., died April 26. Spouse: Vivian Austin. Children: Leslie, Douglas, Marilyn Crouse; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Peace Mennonite Community Church, Aurora, Colo.

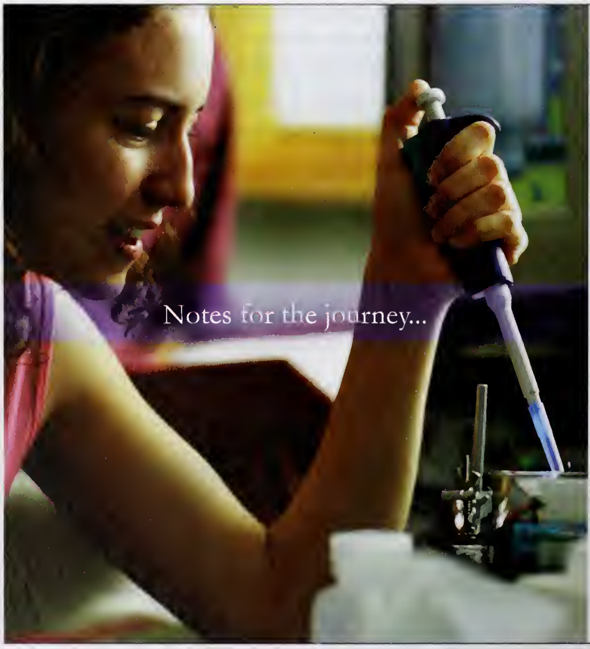
Bebb, Hazel Yoder, 88, Albany, Ore., died May 14. Spouse: Elmer A. Yoder (deceased). Parents: G. Roscoe and Clara Tyson Bebe. Children: Pat Hershberger, Shirley Yoder Brubaker, Judy Stutzman; five grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 19 at Shridan (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Brockmueller, David, 89, Corpus Christi, Texas, died March 25. Spouse: Eileen Bousfield (deceased). Parents: William and Mary Preheim Brockmueller. Children: Jerry, Brian; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: April 22 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Christophel, Ellen Christner, 65, Battle Creek, Mich., died May 10 of pulmonary fibrosis combined with pneumonia. Spouse: Eldon Clare Christophel. Parents: Monroe and Edna Hershberger Christner. Children: Kevin, Yvonne Pizarro; nine grandchildren. Funeral: May 13 at Pine Grove Mennonite Church, Battle Creek.

Dean, W. John, 63, Lancaster, Pa., died May 23. Spouse: Darlene Sutherland Dean. Parents: William and Frances Bihlmeyer Dean. Child: William James; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 26 at Hershey Mennonite Church, Kinzers, Pa.

Eichelberger, Clayton, 77, Valparaiso, Ind., died May 21. Spouse: Laura Eichelberger (deceased). Parents: Chris and Adeline Eichelberger. Children: Lyle, Carl. Funeral: May 27 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts, Ind.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Gingerich, Vernon Joseph, 84, Canby, Ore., died May 17. Spouse: Dorothy Lais Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Walter and Alta Snyder Gingerich. Children: Raymond, John, Douglas, Dorothy Elaine Brenneman, Thomas, Charles, Carolyn, Judy, Craig; 17 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 21 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

Graber, Leone Ortman, 92, Freeman, S.D., died April 19. Spouse: Richard Graber (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Caroline Ries Ortman. Children: DeLayne, Kenneth, James; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: April 29 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Hanauer, Catherine H. Newcomer, 100, Rheems, Pa., died May 28. Spouse: Dalton Hanauer (deceased). Parents: Ephraim R. and Stella Noll Newcomer. Stepchild: Paul. Funeral: May 31 at Millersville (Pa.) Mennonite Cemetery.

Hershey, Erma B., 82, Intercourse, Pa., died May 4. Parents: Isaac and Esther Brackbill Hershey. Funeral: May 8 at Hershey Mennonite Church, Kinzers, Pa.

Kropf, Ellis, 91, Hubbard, Ore., died May 25. Spouse; Emma Hueth Kropf (deceased). Parents: Chauncey and Lomie Detweiler Kropf. Children: Richard, Bertha Mathis, Mary Ellen Van Syoc; 14 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 31 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard.

Martens, Cathleen Marie, 28, Winnipeg, Man., died May 22. Parents: Rudy and Edna Martens. Funeral: May 27 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona, Man.

Martin, Alice M., 79, Orrville, Ohio, died May 25. Parents: Phares and Magdalena Miller. Funeral: May 29 at Orrville Mennonite Church.

Plank, John Philip, 86, Bellefontaine, Ohio, died May 8 of cancer. Spouse: Alma Fern Headings Plank. Parents: Samuel E. and Corrine Beiler Plank. Children: Edwin Jay, Gene, Susan Weseloh, Joyce Bazzle; 11 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 13 at South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio.

Sauder, Orval D., 91, Archbold, Ohio, died May 22. Spouse: Ilva Short Sauder. Parents: Emmanuel and Cora Baer Souder. Children: Jeff, Jeanette Cripe, Carol Nafziger, Judy Yoder, Linda Rupp, Carolyn Kauffman; 18 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 27 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Sommerfeld, Clarence Willis, 96, Hesston, Kan., died May 24. Spouse: Anabel Beck Sommerfeld (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Matie Young Sommerfeld. Children: Gordon, Jay; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Stalter, S. Fred, 95, Elida, Ohio, died May 15. Spouse: Mary Heatwole Stalter (deceased). Parents: James and Bertie Swartz Stalter. Children: Caroline Beggs, Shirley Kauffman, Janice Roth, Dorothy Troyer, James; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 19 at Pike Mennonite Church, Elida.

Trust/Investment Advisor

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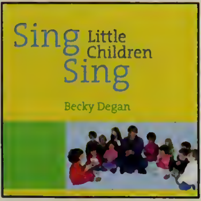

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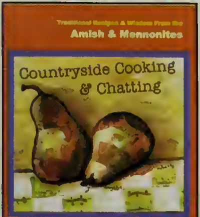
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Eastern Mennonite School is seeking a part-time ***U.S. History teacher*** for the 2006-07 school year.

Please express your interest to Paul G. Leaman, principal, if you share the call for Christ-centered education in an academic environment. Email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502. EMHS is an equal opportunity employer.

Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa., seeks ***communications coordinator/administrative assistant.*** Graphic design and good writing skills required. Web site design experience a plus. Full salary and benefits, including housing. Contact Lanny Millette, 800-864-7747, millette@camphebron.org.

Lake house for sale: **Camp Friedenswald** is selling a 3 BR, 1 bath home on approximately 1/2 acre. The property has lake access and is adjacent to the camp in southern Michigan on Lake Shavehead. For more info and pictures visit www.friedenswald.org or call 269-476-9744 and ask for Todd.

Director of financial aid. **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary** seeks a half-time director of financial aid to oversee the seminary's financial aid program, awarding and processing institutional and federal aid, maintaining accurate records and determining formulae for aid within the budget. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree, analytical ability and strong administrative and communication skills. Send letter of application and resumé with three references by June 23 to Regina Shands Stoltzfus, director of admissions and financial aid, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517; or rsstoltzfus@ambs.edu. See full job description at www.ambs.edu/php/welcome/wel_job_financialaiddirector.php.

Rosthern (Sask.) Mennonite Church is seeking a full-time ***youth pastor*** to start the end of August 2006. We are a small-town congregation with some 200 members and an active youth program. For more information, please contact Jim Epp, search committee chair, Box 519, Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0. Phone: 306-232-5577, email rosthernmc@sasktel.net.

Louisville (Ky.) Urban Corps is looking for recent college graduates who want to develop vocational skills in the context of service and community living. ***Internships*** include social services and businesses suited to your interests. Participate in weekly faith formation seminars. Apply now for program that begins Aug. 28. Contact Susan Rhema at lou.urbancorps@win.net

Dock Woods Community, a continuing-care retirement community located in Lansdale, Pa., is looking for a full- time ***activity coordinator*** for our Harmony House Nursing Unit. Job responsibilities include utilizing knowledge of organization and interpersonal communication skills in order to plan, organize, present and implement activities that provide social, cognitive, creative, physical and spiritual benefit to the residents; planning, organizing, directing and presenting activities. In addition, this team member will be responsible for coordinating, orientating, supervising, instructing and developing volunteers in the activities department.

Dock Woods Community offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Interested candidates should send resumé along with salary requirements to the HR Dept. 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446 or fax to 215-565-2413. EOE www.dockwoods.com

Little Eden Camp seeking full-time ***executive director*** position for year-round program in northern Michigan. Job description available upon request. Send resumé to Dean Beck, President, 24509 County Rd E, Archbold, OH 43502, or email edean@bright.net.

Bay Shore Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla., is seeking applicants for ***minister of worship/music.*** Please contact Mary Ann Lederman at 941-377-1956 after 5 p.m. or email rmalederman@msn.com.

Arizona voluntary service opportunities. **Goldensun**, together with **Phoenix area Mennonite churches**, offer ***Christian service and vocational opportunities*** while living in community with adult people with developmental disabilities. Contact Leroy Willems, 623-219-9647 or email Leroy.w@cox.net.

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Qualifications: Graduation from an accredited college with a concentration in theology, pastoral care or religious studies; completion of 2-4 units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and experience in working collaboratively with other disciplines in a health-care setting, preferably long-term care.

Please send resumé to: Marion Shackford, Executive Director, 13030 Warwick Blvd., Newport News, VA 23602; marion@mennowood.com

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks F/T ***director of global ministries*** to lead EMM's long-term sending. Required: long-term mission experience, bachelor's degree and Anabaptist core values. Preferred: graduate theological and/or missiological credentials, and experience and/or training in Anabaptist context(s). Flexible start date: September 2006 or later. For more information, contact Jeanette Hunt at jeanetteh@emm.org or 717-898-2251 by June 23.

Philadelphia Mennonite High School (grades 9-12) seeks applicants for the following positions for the 2006-07 school year: ***P/T English instructor, F/T science/math instructor, P/T guidance counselor, P/T custodian/maintenance***. Please send resumé to Barbara Moses, Principal, Philadelphia Mennonite High School, 860 N. 24th St., Philadelphia, PA 19130; fax 215-769-4063; email os147@comcast.net.

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Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2006.

Seeking ***dorm life director*** to lead dorm program and develop a nurturing, caring, Christ-centered community. Responsibilities include managing dorm staff, planning weekday and weekend activities, providing a safe, enjoyable, learning environment and being a role model and mentor for youth. Leadership and youth work experience desired. Must be willing to work with students from different cultures.

Assistant dorm life director to provide planning, leadership and management support for the dorm life director. The dorm life positions could be filled as a husband and wife team.

Food services director to direct food preparation and supervise kitchen staff. Manage inventory, record keeping, the federal lunch program and student assistants. Ensure health standards are followed. Create a healthy atmosphere for students and staff. Experience required.

Contact Mike Wenger at mwenger@westernmenno-niteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

High school math/science teacher for algebra and introduction to physical science. Full-time position with opportunities to coach. Contact Darrel Camp at dcamp@westernmennoniteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students locally and from various states/provinces/countries. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ. All positions are full-time, 10 months, with benefits.

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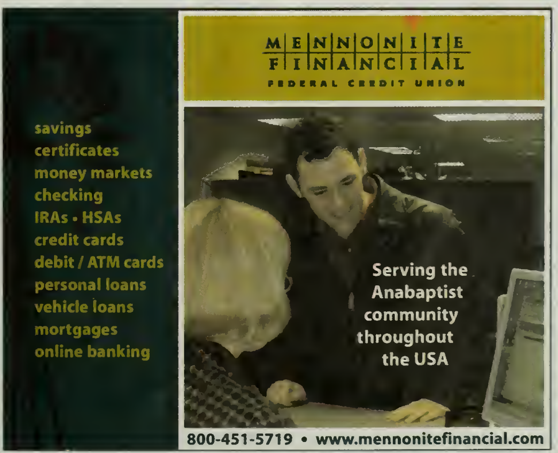
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Nutritious books to chew on this summer

Gordon Houser

Eugene Peterson commends us to "eat" Scripture (see below). Here are some other books to munch on this summer. May you find sustenance and use these to grow in your Christian faith.

Family: *Monday Marriage: Celebrating the Ordinary* by Gerald W. and L. Marlene Kaufman (Herald Press, 2005, $9.99) sees marriage "as a sacred union built around truthfulness and reality, not trivialized by a culture of superficiality and secularity." It calls couples to expect less and give more to their marriages.

Priority Parenting: Reclaiming Your Home for Heaven's Sake by Steve Granger (Herald Press, 2006, $9.99) explores what constitutes a real home, the overcommitment in our schedule, the hurried lifestyle we are passing along to our kids, what God intends childhood to be and ideas for making our house a home that worships God.

Spirituality: *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* by Eugene H. Peterson (Eerdmans, 2006, $20) is the second volume in his proposed five-volume series on spiritual theology. Shorter (and weaker) than his opening volume, this one nevertheless offers rich insights mixed with stories. Peterson argues that the way we read the Bible is as important as that we read it. "To read the Scriptures adequately and accurately," he writes, "it is necessary at the same time to live them." Sounds like an Anabaptist.

Centuries of Holiness: Ancient Spirituality Refracted for a Postmodern Age by Richard Valantasis (Continuum, 2005, $24.95) offers 100 short essays—a device used by a fourth-century writer—on 100 spiritual themes. Each relates to "the ascetic struggle toward divinization," which is the goal of human existence. This book, though difficult, is full of wisdom.

Christian Spirituality: God's Presence Through the Ages by Richard J. Woods (Orbis, 2006, $25) is an excellent survey of Christian spirituality. Expanded from a 1989 edition, it is thorough yet accessible. Woods, a Catholic, includes an interesting perspective on the Anabaptist Movement, acknowledging its variety while noting its anti-materialism.

Bible: *Remember the Future: The Pastoral Theology of Paul the Apostle* by Jacob W. Elias (Herald Press, 2006, $15.99) uses a narrative approach to explicate the context and meaning of Paul's letters. He pictures Paul looking both into a rearview mirror at the cross of Christ and through a windshield at God's ongoing work through the Spirit. "The church in its worship and life and witness and remember [the] guaranteed future," he writes, "and live already in the present in light of God's final victory." Elias has provided a treasure trove for preachers.

Reading Ritual: Leviticus in Postmodern Culture by Wesley J. Bergen (T&T Clark International, 2005, $120) is a fascinating look at the meaning of sacrifice in Leviticus and today. While the cost seems prohibitive, seminaries should have a copy. Bergen combines scholarship with a clear, accessible style. Two quotes to whet your appetite: "When it comes down to both our money and our lives, ritual logic, the logic of bodies in motion, has a greater impact than verbal logic." "Human sacrifice is an American practice, not an Israelite one."

Theology: *God's Advocates: Christian Thinkers in Conversation* by Rupert Short (Eerdmans, 2006, $20) is a Q and A with 18 working theologians, including Rowan Williams, Stanley Hauerwas and Miroslav Volf. For those interested (few, I realize) it is full of fresh insights.

Philosophy and Theology by John D. Caputo (Abingdon, 2006, $12) argues that these two disciplines need each other, that they are "two kinds of faith." Written simply and brief (84 pages), this is the best introduction to the topic I've seen.

Gracious Christianity: Living the Love We Profess by Douglas Jacobsen and Rodney J. Sawatsky (Baker Academic, 2006, $12.99) is an overview of Christian beliefs that emphasizes graciousness in faith and life. Simpler than those above.

Essays: Recent books of essays edited and/or written by Mennonites worth exploring are *Vital Christianity: Spirituality, Justice and Christian Practice*, edited by David L. Weaver-Zercher and William H. Willimon (T&T Clark International, 2005, $29.95), *At Peace and Unafraid: Public Order, Security and the Wisdom of the Cross*, edited by Duane K. Friesen and Gerald W. Schlabach (Herald Press, 2006, $24.99) and *Evangelical, Ecumenical and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation: Essays in Honor of Wilbert R. Shenk*, edited by James R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky and Charles E. Van Engen (Orbis Books, 2006, $25).

FILMS

Tsotsi (R) won this year's Academy Award for best foreign-language film. This disturbing South African film focuses on a teenage gang leader ("tsotsi" means thug) in the slums of Johannesburg who steals a car and discovers a baby in the back seat. We witness the stark difference between rich and poor yet experience the humanity of each. This unsentimental, powerful film may change you.

Joyeux Noel (PG-13) is a French film based on the true story of a Christmas truce among French, Scottish and German troops during World War I. Its focus on peripheral (fictional) characters (such as a famous German soprano) detracts from its powerful antiwar theme. However, the accumulating details about the soldiers help save it.

The DaVinci Code (PG-13) is a tepid, cursory summary of the book. The whole phenomenon shows that people love conspiracies, even ones based on faulty theories of history. It also shows that many people don't read history carefully.

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Everett J. Thomas

Bird flu

Should the Mennonite church do something about the impending spread of bird flu? Yes. It is not a matter of whether the worldwide pandemic will happen but when.

Currently, the virus infects only birds. They, in turn, infect humans. But any day now the H5N1 virus could mutate into a new virus that spreads from human to human. When that happens, it will take six months to develop a vaccine.

During those six months, the virus would spread from one person to another with something as simple as a sneeze or cough. In 90 days it would spread around the world (think of people sneezing and coughing on international flights). When the human-to-human mutation reaches the United States, it would spread from coast-to-coast in about three weeks.

Conservative estimates of the effect on the economy suggest that 30 percent of workers would be out sick and another 20 percent would not go to work. Much of the modern infrastructure we take for granted—transportation, communications, business—could fail. Health systems would be overwhelmed.

Predictably, the poorest of our neighbors would be the most vulnerable. Those of us with the resources to protect ourselves would be less at risk. Inequities in our current health-care system would be exposed as dramatically as Hurricane Katrina exposed the levies and social inequalities in New Orleans last year.

The church will have an opportunity to show its true colors if such a catastrophe happens.

One way to cope with this impending catastrophe is to deny it. Some cynics have already dubbed the coming pandemic "YFluK"—suggesting it is yet another case of leaders crying wolf about a nonexistent problem (like the way all computers were supposed to crash at midnight on Dec. 31, 1999 ... called Y2K).

But cynicism is irresponsible. The world—and our country—have seen pandemics before. The Spanish flu of 1918 killed 50 million people worldwide—500,000 in the United States. More recently there have been other deadly flu strains started by birds. In the United States alone, the Asian flu killed about 70,000 people in 1957 and 1958, and Hong Kong flu killed some 34,000 people in 1968 and 1969.

So what would it mean to plan responsibly for such a catastrophe?

- Each congregation could tap the shoulder of a nurse, doctor or other health professional and ask them to prepare a Sunday morning presentation that explains the situation within the context of a creator God who loves us all.
- Congregations can talk about what to do if mass panic sets neighbor against neighbor (maybe even members of a congregation against each other) if there were not enough hospital beds to accommodate the sick.
- The U.S. Health Department suggests each family store supplies of food, water and nonprescription medicines. Congregations could also store supplies to help those who did not prepare because they could not afford the additional expense—or shrugged off the danger.
- Each congregation could train and prepare a volunteer group willing to respond to emergencies among congregational members and neighbors.
- Congregational members can remind each other (and teach children) hygiene patterns that help prevent the spread of disease.
- Within congregations and families, members can discuss what kind of care they would want should they become sick and need to be cared for in their homes.

Mennonite Church USA has been focusing on the dysfunctional health-care system in the United States ever since Atlanta 2003 delegates adopted the Healthcare Access Resolution. The complexities and political calculus swirling around existing health care issues would be magnified a hundredfold by a bird flu pandemic.

The church will have an opportunity to show its true colors if such a catastrophe happens. We would also be able to demonstrate that dying is not the worst thing that can happen to us.—*ejt*

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TheMennonite

www.TheMennonite.org
July 4, 2006

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We look, we long for you

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

Our hearts are empty without you
Barren and cold, but for the bold
Hope that you yourself, planted within.
In the mighty name of God
In the saving name of Jesus
In the strong name of the Spirit
We come, we cry, we watch, we wait, we look, we
long for you.—Jim Croegaert, "We Come," Rough
Stones Music

This past winter, we waited and waited for what we knew was supposed to come at any moment. Residents of the northern states waited for snow that appeared, then disappeared between warm spells. Those who live in the southern states waited for rain. Phoenix logged over 125 consecutive days without rain. And those in the northwest thought it wise to quote Matthew 5:45 about God sending rain on the just and the unjust in order to reassure themselves they weren't being punished by the unusual deluge they were experiencing. That region waited for dry weather.

We all knew the winter weather was not the way it was supposed to be, according to our past experience. So we tried every means possible to help us live with our uneasiness. Even Garrison Keillor in his monologue on "Prairie Home Companion" described the coffee drinkers at the Chatterbox Café as obsessively conversing and speculating over the weather until the owner/waitress decreed that there would be no more discussion of the weather. And I have no doubt that the anxiety of the Chatterbox Café clientele could also have been found in every small town and city block in America. The weather was just not normal.

There are patterns in life we come to expect. We expect certain weather conditions to occur in the same way we expect our Lord to return someday. After all, we have been taught that a day will come when Jesus will return to this earth at a time no one knows. This I know.

To be truthful, however, Jesus' return is not a major topic in our church landscape these days. Even *Hymnal: A Worship Book* contains only three hymns specifically devoted to Christ's return.

Jesus' coming again used to be a subject of major concern. Many African American spirituals lament the trials of this earth and long for deliverance from suffering at Jesus' return. "Soon and Very Soon" (HWB 611) promises no more crying and no more dying when we see the King. The coming of Jesus will also introduce a reign of justice on this earth like we have not seen since the fall of Adam and Eve. Without a doubt, these are certainties for which we should eagerly hope. Yet few of us truly come and cry, watch and wait or look and long for our Lord's return.

Just as we couldn't decide whether to be thankful for the dry roads and easy driving conditions or uneasy over this year's strange divergence from the normal weather pattern, we also can't decide how to wait for the Lord. Should we turn our faces toward heaven and be thankful God has given us all these extra days to enjoy God's creative work, or should we bow in humble confession, awaiting the imminent return of the one who will judge us?

Admitting that our hearts are empty without Jesus implies there is little on this earth that can satisfy us. Consequently, eternal life in heaven should be a better option than continuing to enjoy empty fruit here below. But few of us would make that choice today. What does it mean to long for Jesus' return? Do we live on the bold hope Jesus planted in us, or do we settle for the here and now?

I pray that we come, cry, watch, wait, look and long for our Lord's return. But all I know is that we seem equally uneasy discussing the unusual weather pattern and the return of our Lord.

TheMennonite

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Vol. 9, No. 13, July 4, 2006

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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Cover: Christian Peacemaker Teams photo of CPT worker Kathleen Kern with Palestinian children in Hebron

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Antiwar enough?

Joy Kauffman's article "Are We Antiwar Enough?" is well written and timely (Speaking Out, June 6). However, I think Kauffman gives our Neoconservatives too much credit. The U.S. military-industrial complex wants ever more war, regardless of the peaceful overtures made by any government that it deigns to attack. It's all about making money through more lucrative government contracts to make newer, smarter weapons. Every few years we need a war to test our newer, smarter weapons so we can design ever newer and smarter weapons. I would like to see every church, synagogue, mosque and temple of every faith in the United States take to the streets and vigil for peace on a regular basis. As Martin Luther King Jr., said, "We have to institutionalize nonviolence and take it international."

To do this, the United States should lead the way, and since our government won't do it, people of faith should insist that it do so. That means "feet on the street" for peace.—*Daniel Riehl, Landenberg, Pa.*

Joy Kauffman's otherwise useful article was marred by the suggestion that the invasion of Iraq could have been averted by Saddam Hussein ending his "war on Iraqi citizens" and his granting of Western-style civil rights. I can understand why any citizen would remain confused about the reasons given for invading Iraq, since the stated reasons from our leaders have all been proven mendacious. But nowhere did I hear the intimation that the Baath party would be expected to turn Iraq into a democracy.—*Paul R. Schlitz Jr., Baltimore*

IN THIS ISSUE

For this issue, dated July 4, we include a sermon by Dee Dee Baldwin (page 8) that challenges the American notion that freedom comes from fighting wars. Our freedom comes from Jesus, she writes, who calls us to a nonviolent life. Seven of the eight feature articles and columns in this issue are written by women, and our cover story (page 12) by Jeanette Harder looks at the unique role women play in peacemaking. From her work in India with Mennonite Central Committee, Twila Miller (page 14) explores the relationship between teaching literacy and empowering women. And Sheri Hartzler (page 17) shares a lesson she learned while serving at a food pantry. Following its title, our Real Families column (page 30) by Gerald Shenk reflects on the grief of divorce through the story of a real family. And reflecting the July 4 theme, Editor Everett Thomas challenges the oft-heard claim that America's founding fathers were model Christians.—*Associate editor*

Time to build

While Everett J. Thomas' vote to sell the building formerly home to Mennonite Church agencies in Elkhart, Ind., was likely justified ("It Is Time to Build," Editorial, June 6), I wonder about his desire to "unhook from old Mennonite Church (MC) identities." If indeed the pitch is being made for retirement-age supporters to fund a new brick-and-mortar project, might it have been better to emphasize some continuity with the Mennonite Church heritage, faithful leadership and conviction embodied in the tall building in Elkhart?—*Harold D. Lehman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

We are grateful for Everett Thomas' support for the proposed new facility in Elkhart, Ind., for use by Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership and Mission Network staff (Editorial, June 6). It may not have been clear that this will be a regional denominational building and that Mennonite Church USA staff will continue to function from other locations.

Staff for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership and Mission Network as well as for Mennonite Women, Mennonite Men, *The Mennonite*, Mennonite Publishing Network and others will continue to serve the church from offices in Newton, Kan., and Mennonite Media staff from its office in Harrisonburg, Va. Other churchwide offices include the Publishing Network's facility in Scottdale, Pa., and MMA's corporate office in Goshen, Ind.—*Ron Byler, Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership*

Do we have to choose?

In "Do We Have to Choose Between Doctrine and Unity?" (June 6), Karl Landis proposes a taxonomy of levels of importance. As useful as this exercise might be, I have a few questions for Landis. Who decides the relative importance of the four levels of doctrines: seminary professors, conference leaders, voters at delegate assemblies? How does any specific doctrine help us walk as Jesus walked—a walk we must take if we claim to be in Christ (1 John 2:5-6)? In this walk, what doctrinal level would war and peace issues be classified? How does one distinguish between the law of Moses and grace and truth via Jesus (John 1:17)? Can a "correct" doctrine of God—or clarity concerning the difference between the virginal conception and virginal birth of Jesus—aid us in this assessment?

Our unity in Christ comes by a steady resolve to walk with Jesus, not concerning ourselves overly much with how many angels can dance on pin heads or the relevance of classical theism for the 21st century.—*Carl S. Keener, State College, Pa.*

Global warming

It is an interesting juxtaposition in the May 2 issue of *The Mennonite* of yet another Christian leader calling for responsible action to prevent adverse climate change ("Archbishop Warns Bush About His Climate Change Stance," In Brief) and yet another denial of the problem (Jon Kauffman, Readers Say) by those who may not want to be inconvenienced by such calls of action to people of faith. Kauffman claims he prefers "to listen to the scientists" yet denies and misrepresents what the scientific community is saying. He claims "there is almost consensus ... that global warming may not be harmful," using Internet sources for his support. While there is little salient debate in the refereed meteorological and phenological journals about the subject, the consensus in such publication is virtually opposite what Kauffman implies.

Denial of the problem is more convenient. But it is irresponsible and harmful to other living beings, both human and not, both present and future. Both the leaders and the constituents that entrusted authority to these leaders will be judged for it—by God and by our descendants.—*Robert Bristow-Johnson, Burlington, Vt.*

When is war justified?

Ryan Ahlgrim contends (Readers Say, May 16) that Mennonites should not criticize their government when it wages war "to defend their citizens and maintain civil order." Should we not feel uneasy when we expect our government to defend us but at the same time we, as Mennonites, say we want no part of such violence? We must not expect our government to kill and maim on our behalf. Furthermore, Ahlgrim argues that one can rightly criticize the government when it goes to war "without sufficient justification."

That reasoning sounds very much like the just or justifiable war theory. How does one define "sufficient justification"? History is strewn with examples of nations going to war who claim they were being threatened; they struck first before being struck. All wars seem to be defensive, preventive or preemptive. But few wars ever were. Was the Bush administration justified in going to war against Iraq in order to prevent something more serious? Of course not.—*Gerlof D. Homan, Normal, Ill.*

Physicians can practice in Uganda

I just received the May 2 issue and read the story about the Bylers ("Valley of Death for Mission Workers"). I think the subtitle of the article has the potential to send the wrong message. Were the Bylers denied entry to Uganda? If so, it would be good to clarify if that was by the community, their partners or the government.

Uganda is a relatively open country and it would be easy for someone—especially a physician—to read into this title that he or she would have difficulty practicing in Uganda. That would not be factual or helpful.—*Charles Howard, CURE Children's Hospital of Uganda, Mbale, Uganda*

Coping with depression

I appreciated Sara Wenger Shenk's "A Shadow Illness" (Real Families, June 6). I have struggled with depression since childhood. I had a great-uncle who committed suicide and a father who was hospitalized twice with depression. I searched for ways of coping with depression and have found things that help. I walk 40 minutes each weekday with a friend, weather permitting. I signed up with several organizations as a volunteer to force myself to meet people, and I purchased a light-therapy box from Alaska, where winter sadness is common.

I still have bad days but have learned these days are temporary. People who don't become depressed do not truly understand and are apt to say things such as, "How can you be depressed when God is so good and has blessed you so bountifully?"—*Anne Siegrist, Jasper, N.Y.*

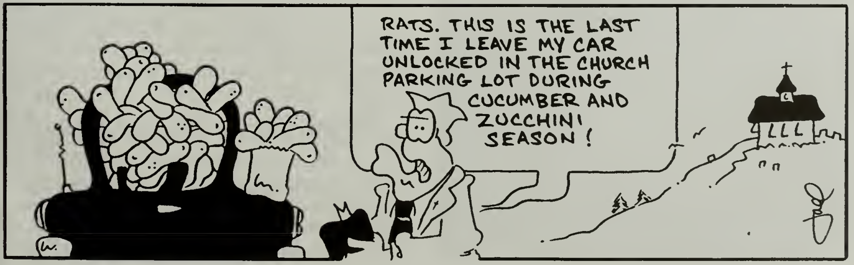
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I will attend a patriotic event on or near July 4 (99 responses):

○ Yes (24%)
○ No (64%)
○ Not sure (12%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


RATS. THIS IS THE LAST TIME I LEAVE MY CAR UNLOCKED IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT DURING CUCUMBER AND ZUCCHINI SEASON!

IN BRIEF

AMBS presents alumni ministry, service awards

Two longtime educators have received the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Alumni Ministry and Service Awards for 2006: Marion G. Bontrager of Hesston, Kan., and Paul M. Lederach of Lansdale, Pa. Bontrager has served on the faculty of Hesston (Kan.) College for more than 30 years. One of his most noteworthy tasks there was developing the course, "Introduction to Biblical Literature." Because this is a required course for all students, he has helped more than 2,500 students understand the biblical story and make it their own. Lederach served Mennonite Publishing House and Mennonite Board of Education for more than 30 years. As editor at MPH he helped launch the first graded Sunday school materials and later was executive director of the Foundation Series, another Sunday school project. Following his work for the denominational agencies, he held leadership and pastoral roles in the Allegheny and Franconia Mennonite conferences. —*AMBS*

Credential returned to Seattle minister

The Pastoral Leadership Committee (PLC) of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (PNMC) has returned the ministerial credential of Seattle Mennonite Church pastor Weldon Nisly to a designation of "at variance." Nisly's credentials were suspended in April 2005 for performing a same-sex covenant ceremony for two members of his congregation.

The decision was presented in a joint statement from the PLC and Seattle Mennonite Church leaders at the PNMC assembly at Kalispell, Mont., June 22-25. According to the statement, the "at variance" designation will be reviewed in one year. During that time Nisly will refrain from performing such ceremonies.

According to the committee, "at variance" is an interim credential that allows Nisly to do ministerial functions as called and confirmed by his congregation but also recognizes a conflicting application of faith understandings that "condition" the credential. The designation is not intended to create a permanent new category for ministerial credentials but serves as a "way station" while there is ongoing dialogue and discernment within Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference.

The joint statement identifies five commitments mutually agreed to by Nisly and the committee for the interim period: to remain in fellowship with each other, to review the "at variance" designation in one year, Nisly will refrain from performing same-sex covenant ceremonies during this year, PLC will challenge PNMC to provide forums to discuss issues of faith and life—such as the discernment of faithful dissent to the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective—and Nisly and PLC will practice respectful representation when speaking about the credential status process. —*Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference*

Kevin Miller

Music, seeds and growth

Meg Kennell, a junior at Bethany Christian Schools, Goshen, Ind., displays cards she painted as part of a choir assignment. Choir director John D. Smucker gave each student $5 as seed money to do something different that would help them discover more about themselves and their gifts. Kennell used her time and money to paint cards, sell them and donate the money to International Rescue Committee. She raised more than $100. Junior Quinton Huffman raised $200 for new seed money by writing letters to adults in the community. —*Bethany Christian Schools*

CPT supports tribal coalition in South Dakota

CHICAGO—At the invitation of an Intertribal Coalition involving 30 local tribes, Christian Peacemaker Teams plans to place a small team at Bear Butte, S.D., from July 3 to Aug. 15.

The coalition has organized a six-week encampment to resist nonviolently continued development and encroachment on territory they consider sacred. Every year, thousands of Native people travel to pray at Bear Butte, located near Sturgis, S.D., in the Black Hills.

The final week of the encampment, Aug. 7-13, will coincide with the 66th annual Sturgis motorcycle rally, which brings 500,000 bikers to the area, creating an enormous impact on the surrounding economy and ecosystem.

Developer Jay Allen has broken ground for a massive new biker bar and concert venue called the Sturgis County Line on 600 acres at the base of Bear Butte. Tribal groups strongly opposed to this development are organizing a campaign of nonviolent direct action to stop it from proceeding. They have asked CPT to assist with planning actions and to be on hand to help reduce tensions and document abuses if violence is threatened. —*CPTnet*

Samuel Stephen, India educator, dies at 88

NEWTON, Kan.—Samuel Stephen, 88, worked his entire life teaching young people, usually leading or working alongside mission workers. The trusted church leader and educator of the Bharatiya General Conference Mennonite Church (BGCMC) in India died April 30.

Stephen was born to Balamdas and Ruth Stephen at Birra, south of Champa, March 28, 1918. His parents were Christians and both served in evangelistic work.

He began his career in education at Mauhadih, teaching in the mission middle school. The facilities were flooded in 1937, so the school was

Jim Bishop

h and all that jazz

st artist Jeremy Wall, a pianist and arranger who has
rded a dozen well-received classical-jazz albums, plays at
14th annual Bach Festival held June 11-18 at Eastern
nonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. "The universal great-
of Bach's music allows it to be adapted to other idioms,"
said during a rehearsal.—*Eastern Mennonite University*

moved 30 miles to Jagdeeshpur where it became the Jansen Memorial School, with mission worker John Thiessen as principal.

After earning a teaching degree, Stephen began teaching at JMS in 1944 and became headmaster in May 1945. He later earned a master's degree in education at Wichita (Kan.) State University, returning to India to become principal of the school, renamed Jansen Memorial Higher Secondary School.

Stephen and the school's manager, mission worker Lubin Jantzen, actively pursued academic excellence while emphasizing evangelism.

In 1966 the church conference ordained him as an evangelist. He enjoyed singing and directed the choir at Bethel Mennonite Church, Jagdeeshpur. During his lifetime he was elected to various positions in the BGCMC—chair, secretary or treasurer—and to conference committees.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Offspring of 'Chortitza Oak' planted at CMU

WINNIPEG—A piece of Ukraine came to Winnipeg in June when a sapling from an ancient oak tree in the former Mennonite settlement of Chortitza was planted at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). The "Chortitza Oak," as it is called, is estimated to be about 800 years old; it was a focal point for the community, which was settled by Mennonites in 1789, and is often visited by North Americans who trace their roots back to the Chortitza area. Before the tree died in the 1990s, many of the visitors would gather acorns in the hope of growing their own Chortitza oak trees back home.

Abe and Eleanor Epp of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., provided the sapling, which they donated to CMU to mark their 50th wedding anniversary. The tree was planted on CMU's south campus, near the Mennonite Heritage Centre.—*CMU*

Ten-year-old Confession has wide distribution

SCOTTDALE, Pa.—After 10 years, the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective continues to have wide distribution in sales of over 3,000 copies a year and is available in 11 languages. In addition, the Confession is available for personal use online at several Web sites. The Confession has been translated into Spanish, Dutch, French, German, Laotian, Vietnamese, Russian, Hmong, Korean and Chinese. Online copies are posted at www.gameo.org and http://info.mennolink.org/menno.html.Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective is published by Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa., and Waterloo, Ont.—*Herald Press*

MMA hosts faith-based investors' conference

GOSHEN, Ind.—MMA hosted the annual meeting of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility June 12-15 at the University of Notre Dame near South Bend, Ind. ICCR is a coalition of faith-based investors who seek to build a more just and sustainable society through shareholder advocacy.

ICCR engages corporations through shareholder resolutions and dialogue with management to prompt changes in policies and procedures. Mark Regier, MMA's stewardship investing services manager, who also serves on the ICCR board and was elected as its chair last week, says that is why MMA owns shares in Wal-Mart, the controversial company many socially minded investors love to hate. "As a shareholder, MMA has unique opportunities to press for lasting change," says Regier. "Walking away would simply allow these concerns to continue to go unaddressed."

ICCR members are actively promoting specific shareholder resolutions with hundreds of corporations on issues ranging from HIV/AIDS to global warming. In 2006 alone, ICCR has filed 264 resolutions at 171 companies and held 276 issue dialogues with 200 different corporations.—*MMA*

—compiled by Gordon Houser and Everett Thomas

IN BRIEF

Sowers named interim vice president at Hesston

Associate academic dean Bonnie Sowers has accepted a one-year appointment to serve as Hesston (Kan.) College's interim vice president for academics. Sowers replaces Marc Yoder, who retired at the end of June. Sowers joined the faculty for two years in 1970 and returned in 1975. She has directed the college's nursing program since 1980 and has served as associate dean from 1990 to 1994 and since 1998. Sowers led reaccreditation self-study efforts in 1991 and 2001 and served as interim academic dean prior to Yoder's appointment. *—Hesston College*

And those who have more will be given more

In May, Congress passed $70 billion in tax cuts over the next five years. The average tax savings for those earning $10,000-$20,000 will be $2. Those earning $100,000-$200,000 will save an average of $1,388. For those making $200,000-$500,000 it jumps to $4,499, and those making more than $1 million will save $41,977.—*Senate Finance Committee, quoted in* Sojourners

"I still believe that one day
mankind will bow before the alters of God
and be crowned triumphant
over war and bloodshed,
and nonviolent redemptive goodwill
will proclaim the rule of the land."
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Independence Day

Freedom & nonviolence go togethe

by DeeDee Baldwin

On America's Independence Day, we break out the barbecue sauce, wear red, white and blue T-shirts and watch fireworks. July 4 is one of the few dates we didn't sweat to remember for our history tests.

You know the names connected to July 4. Thomas Jefferson. John Adams. John Hancock. Benjamin Franklin. You know the stories connected to July 4. How John Hancock signed his name in enormous letters so that King George wouldn't miss it. How Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both died exactly 50 years later, on July 4. How many of the signers, while declaring that all men are created equal, owned slaves—including Thomas Jefferson?

Maybe for some people, Independence Day is Jan. 1, the day Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, saying "all persons held as slaves … are, and henceforward shall be free."

For other people, maybe Aug. 18 is Independence Day. That's the day American women were granted the right to vote in 1920.

What about Aug. 28, 1963, when Martin Luther King Jr. gave his own "Declaration of Independence" in Washington? "When we let freedom ring," he said, "when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'"

When will all God's children join hands and sing together?

When will all of God's children join hands and sing together? When will that happen? Is our Independence Day something that hasn't even happened yet?

The world celebrates many Independence Days throughout the year. The end of apartheid in South Africa, the liberation of Jews from concentration camps in Europe.

When is your Independence Day? If you could have a barbecue picnic and set off fireworks on your day, what would it be? Maybe the day you graduated from high school or college. Maybe the day you decided to quit smoking. Maybe the day you first became a Christian. Maybe for Christians, Easter morning is the day for barbecue and fireworks, so to speak.

Almost all the feast days in Jewish history were celebrated in remembrance of some freedom. There is Passover, when God freed the people from slavery in Egypt. There is Purim, when God used Esther and Mordecai to free his people from a death sentence. There is Hanukkah, when God's people won back the temple, cleansed and rededicated it, and enjoyed freedom from the oppressors who had invaded Israel.

Every 50 years, freedom came in the year of Jubilee, when people were liberated from debts and slavery. One of the main types of offerings conducted in the tabernacle and temple was the free will offering.

Freedom has always been one of the central themes of Christianity, and it was a cornerstone of Christ's message. There is literal freedom, such as Paul's escape from prison. There is physical freedom, from blindness and leprosy and demons. But there is also freedom of heart and mind.

Just as Adam and Eve were given the freedom to choose between good and evil, so God has always given us the freedom to choose him. God loved us enough to give us the freedom to reject him. In doing so, God also had to allow the possibility of evil. Freedom comes at a cost. As the popular bumper sticker says, "Freedom is not free."

And our freedom from sin was not free—Jesus paid the price of it. He signed our Declaration of Independence, and his resurrection left a much bigger signature on it than that feisty old John Hancock could have scribbled.

In C.S. Lewis' book *Perelandra*, a man named Ransom visits another world, a world that is unfallen. He meets a sinless woman and wonders at first how she can have freedom when she never disobeys God. She tells him: "I thought that I was carried in the will of Him I love, but now I see that I walk with it. I thought that the good things He sent me drew me into them as the waves lift the islands; but now I see that it is I who plunge into them with my own legs and arms, as when we go swimming."

Ransom comes to realize that the woman does have a choice, even in a sinless world, because she chooses to obey. And because she always obeys God, she is happier, more content and freer than he can ever be.

Our freedom from sin was not free—Jesus paid the price of it. He signed our Declaration of Independence.

God not only offers us freedom but expects us to do the same for others. Isaiah 42:6-7 (NIV) says: "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness … to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness."

The Independence Day of July 4, 1776, started a war. But men like Martin Luther King in America and Mahatma Ghandi in India sought freedom through peace, the way intended by God.

"Nonviolence is the first article of my faith," Ghandi wrote. "I am prepared to die, but there is no cause for which I am prepared to kill." Ghandi believed that a victory attained through violence and bloodshed was no victory at all.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Zechariah 9:10 (NIV) says, "I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth."

Peace has never been a popular concept in America. While declaring our own freedom, we stole it from Native Americans and Africans. We fought each other in the Civil War over freedom and who could govern it. In 2003, we invaded a country and killed thousands upon thousands of their civilians. Our reasons? Peace and freedom.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Ghandi said, "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent."

Two thousand years ago, Jesus gave a sermon on a small hill by the Sea of Galilee. Despite the popular image of him standing at the top of the hill, he would have been standing closer to the bottom, speaking up to the crowd so that his voice would carry as in a natural amphitheater. "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. … You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."

Would you put your John Hancock to that?

This is Christian Citizenship Sunday. It's been kind of hard lately to figure out what role a Christian citizen has in this country. How do we find a balance between respecting the separation of church and state, while still allowing our convictions to guide us? How do we talk about freedom while our country imprisons and tortures people in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib? How do we talk about forgiveness in a world of frivolous lawsuits and the death penalty? How do we talk about peace while guns and violence, not to mention the war in Iraq, have such a grip on the nation's consciousness?

How do we find a balance between respecting the separation of church and state, while still allowing our convictions to guide us?

I don't have the answers to any of those questions, but I think Martin Luther King did. So I'm going to close by quoting his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech on Dec. 10, 1964. Amazingly—and sadly—his words are still relevant today.

"Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question of our time—the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression.

"Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts. … Nonviolence is not sterile passivity but a powerful moral force that makes for social transformation. Sooner or later all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood.

"If this is to be achieved, man must evolve for all human conflict a method that rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love. (…)

"I [have] an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind. I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history. I refuse to accept the idea that the 'isness' of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal 'oughtness' that forever confronts him.

"I refuse to accept the idea that man is mere flotsam and jetsam in the river of life, unable to influence the unfolding events that surround him. I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.

"I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of thermonuclear destruction. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.

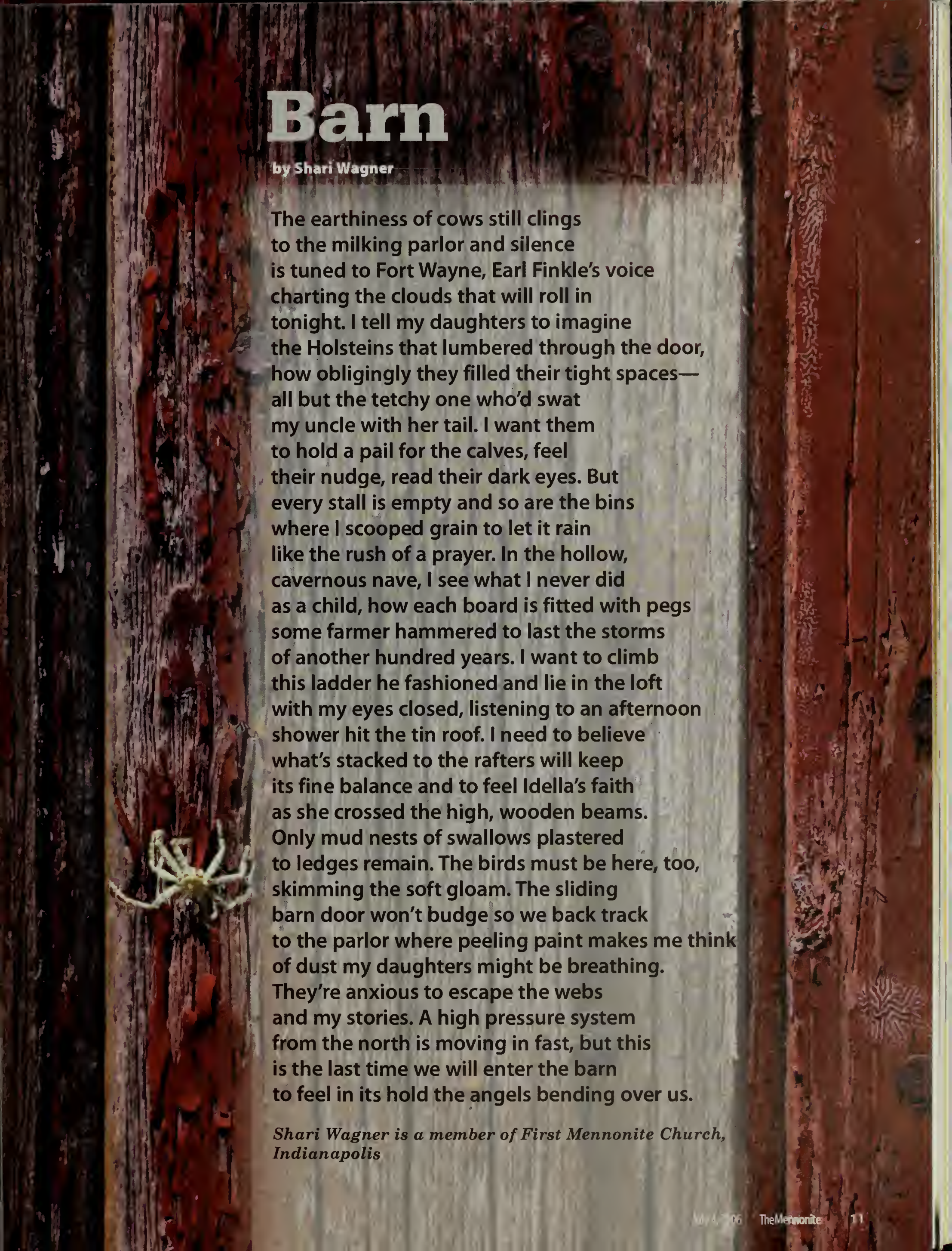
"I believe that even amid today's mortar bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow. I believe that wounded justice, lying prostrate on the blood-flowing streets of our nations, can be lifted from this dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of men.

"I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, men other-centered can build up. I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and nonviolent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land."

King closed by saying, "And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall be afraid."

Happy Independence Day!

Dee Dee Baldwin is a member of Jubilee Mennonite Church, Meridian, Miss. This article is adapted from a sermon she gave there on July 3, 2005.



Barn

by Shari Wagner

The earthiness of cows still clings
to the milking parlor and silence
is tuned to Fort Wayne, Earl Finkle's voice
charting the clouds that will roll in
tonight. I tell my daughters to imagine
the Holsteins that lumbered through the door,
how obligingly they filled their tight spaces—
all but the tetchy one who'd swat
my uncle with her tail. I want them
to hold a pail for the calves, feel
their nudge, read their dark eyes. But
every stall is empty and so are the bins
where I scooped grain to let it rain
like the rush of a prayer. In the hollow,
cavernous nave, I see what I never did
as a child, how each board is fitted with pegs
some farmer hammered to last the storms
of another hundred years. I want to climb
this ladder he fashioned and lie in the loft
with my eyes closed, listening to an afternoon
shower hit the tin roof. I need to believe
what's stacked to the rafters will keep
its fine balance and to feel Idella's faith
as she crossed the high, wooden beams.
Only mud nests of swallows plastered
to ledges remain. The birds must be here, too,
skimming the soft gloam. The sliding
barn door won't budge so we back track
to the parlor where peeling paint makes me think
of dust my daughters might be breathing.
They're anxious to escape the webs
and my stories. A high pressure system
from the north is moving in fast, but this
is the last time we will enter the barn
to feel in its hold the angels bending over us.

Shari Wagner is a member of First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis

Women & peacemaking

by Jeanette Harder

They seemed surprised I did not cower before the presence of their weapons but engaged them in conversation. I had the sense they were used to two responses from women: fear or desiring attention. When I acted out of neither, it surprised them. Sometimes surprise is a good peacemaking tool.

Women bring a perspective to peacemaking that is vital and unique. Their experiences are different from men's, as are their motivations and methods. This article explores women's roles as peacemakers, giving special attention to those opportunities and barriers that are perhaps unique to women.

I invited women actively serving with Christian Peacemaker Teams to participate in an online discussion. Seven women participated, all having served cross culturally with CPT. Four of them were in the United States at the time, two in Colombia and one in Jerusalem. I asked them to describe their experiences.

CPT offers an organized, nonviolent alternative to war and other forms of lethal intergroup conflict. CPT provides organizational support to people committed to faith-based, nonviolent alternatives in situations where lethal conflict is an immediate reality or is supported by public policy. CPT enlists the response of the whole church in conscientious objection to war and the development of nonviolent institutions, skills and training for intervention in conflict situations. A CPT team consists of two to 12 people who join the efforts of local peacemakers in facing imminent violence. While at a site, CPT corps members provide a nonviolent presence with individuals or communities who are threatened; physically intervene to prevent violence; report on human rights abuses, plan and carry out creative, nonviolent public responses to injustice; train others in nonviolent direct action and speak and write to media, interested groups, congregations and organizations. Whether male or female, members of CPT believe that "getting in the way" of injustice through direct nonviolent intervention, public witness and reporting to the larger world community can make a difference.

Peace is a woman's issue: One theme that emerged quickly in the online discussion was a woman's role as a mother. This idea is that peace is a woman's issue because women are givers of life and nurturers. Peace is a woman's issue because they teach the next generation about nonviolence through modeling cooperation and creative problem-solving. Peace is a women's issue because mothers are especially experienced in listening to their children and are predisposed to nonviolent and gentler ways.

Several women said they can successfully de-escalate a violent situation simply because they remind soldiers of soldiers' mothers, sisters or grandmothers. One 51-year-old participant said she has been able gently to scold soldiers "when they behave badly" and that they often respond positively. Another respondent called this the "I look enough like your mother/sister that you shouldn't mess with me" phenomenon.

One participant said many women are also more available to engage in peacemaking activities because they have more flexible schedules. She clarified:

Several women said they can successfully de-escalate a violent situation simply because they remind soldiers of soldiers' mothers, sisters or grandmothers.

Women's experiences in cross-cultural peacemaking

"This does not mean they do not work as hard or as many hours, but they are more likely to configure their lives in such a way as to allow space for family, relationships and service—including peace work."

One participant wrote that men often react to other men in a threatening way, whereas women are more open, less reactive and therefore more effective in disarming potentially violent situations. Another woman writing from Colombia related a tangible example of how she is more easily able to engage with families:

"I realized one way I have an advantage is that if I'm walking at night and I call out a greeting, even the sound of my voice can be calming. 'Oh, it's not armed men; that was the voice of a woman.'"

Two barriers to effective peacemaking emerged from women's writings: the "men's room" and sexual encounters. Several women serving with CPT wrote of the men's room as a physical barrier to their full participation in peacemaking activities. Two young women serving in Colombia wrote of the challenges to peacemaking they face due to bathroom facilities and not having running water or toilets. They share that when a male team member needs to "relieve himself," he can simply step outside the house, do his business and return promptly to the conversation at hand. Women, confined by cultural rules, must find a place far away from people (and thus closer to more mosquitoes) to bathe or go to the bathroom. One woman wrote: "While these things seem small, I definitely have found myself missing parts of conversations planning where I will go to the bathroom—something I doubt happens to men too often."

Sexual harassment: Women serving with CPT spoke of dealing with sexual harassment and other unwanted attention. Particularly in Palestine, young women experience sexual harassment from teens in the streets, usually in the form of pinches or flirtatious behavior. They concur that middle-age and older women do not usually receive such treatment. One young woman spoke of her feelings of embarrassment, frustration and rage when Israeli soldiers flirted with her when she was working to intervene in violent situations.

The issue of male team members "protecting" female members from sexual harassment came up. One woman described the danger it can put a male team member into when he seeks to "protect" her because he may do something he otherwise would not do, and he may not have the safety that comes with a passport, race or class.

While all women wrote of their frustration with having to respect the culturally accepted gender boundaries when working cross culturally, the woman living and working in Jerusalem suggested that women "do not have to conform completely to the local expectations of gender behavior." In this "third gender" role, she contended that she is able to speak with local men, which is normally not permissible for women in that culture. One woman who was serving in Colombia wrote of her ability to "be in conversation with a whole group of men, and it will be seen just as a CPT phenomenon."

Another woman working in Colombia wrote: "I have short hair and can be outspoken, and I like building things and generally have a good pocketknife. These things take me out of the norm for women of the Opon and allow me into a space that can throw some of the men off."

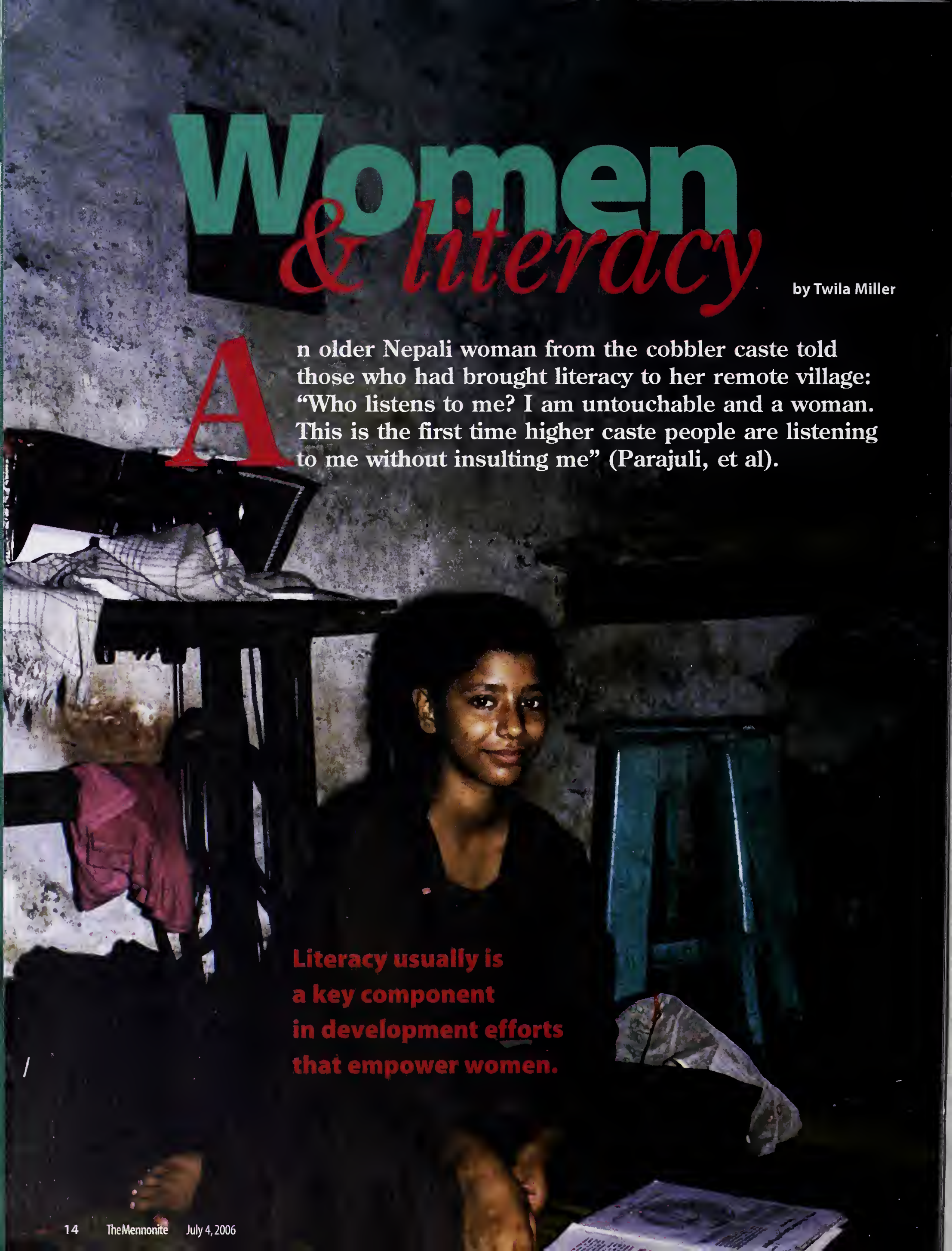
This "surprise factor," she believes, allows her to communicate in ways that would not be allowed of local women. Another young woman felt that being female had helped her interact nonviolently with soldiers or paramilitaries. She wrote: "When an Israeli soldier was pushing and smacking a Palestinian man, I attempted to step in between them but was unable. So I grabbed the Israeli soldiers arm—which frankly shocked us both—and he stopped what he was doing. Luckily I was not arrested.

Women bring unique perspectives and experiences to peacemaking that need to be acknowledged, welcomed and embraced.

While being able to violate "accepted gender behavior," women also wrote of the importance of conforming to local standards at times. They said that at times the team's credibility was at stake. Some examples from the Middle East include conforming to local expectations of modesty in dress, not wearing long hair down, not walking in the street alone and keeping sleeping quarters strictly separate for men and women.

The participants in this research project demonstrate that women can and do play a vital role in peacemaking. Women bring unique perspectives and experiences to peacemaking that need to be acknowledged, welcomed and embraced. War and violence affect us all. We cannot afford to ignore the strengths, experience and knowledge that women bring to the work of cross-cultural peacemaking.

Jeanette Harder teaches social work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and is a member of First Mennonite Church, Lincoln, Neb.



Women & literacy

by Twila Miller

An older Nepali woman from the cobbler caste told those who had brought literacy to her remote village: "Who listens to me? I am untouchable and a woman. This is the first time higher caste people are listening to me without insulting me" (Parajuli, et al).

Literacy usually is a key component in development efforts that empower women.

Amreen Naaz, 12, works on biology homework in her family's one-room home in Calcutta, India. Last year, Amreen and her older sister were pulled out of school when their parents were unable to afford the fees. This year, Global Family sponsors provide books and school fees for both girls, who are now back in school.

Why MCC India partners with groups that promote literacy for women and girls.

When a low-caste woman in India (or Nepal) can stand up in a group of people that includes men and speak her mind with confidence or argue vigorously in a lively village discussion and help influence change, something important is going on. That moment when she first stands up and makes a heartfelt statement publicly about something dear to her heart is a transforming event for her. She will never be the same. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) India applauds her.

When, because of our commitment to working for justice and improving people's lives, we help bring oppressed women a similar giddy moment of self-actualization, we know that MCC's work has borne fruit of long-lasting impact.

In this article I defend MCC India's current practice of partnering with groups that work to empower women and girls by providing them literacy training. I will explain how literacy work, done in the context of women's groups, empowers women, increasing their self-esteem and enabling them to initiate changes that benefit their families, other women and their village or community.

MCC's intentions: MCC India is committed to empowering marginalized people, especially disadvantaged and oppressed women. The organization tries to be gender sensitive in all its work. These intentions stand with MCC's mission statement:

- MCC seeks to demonstrate God's love by working among people suffering from poverty, conflict, oppression and natural disaster.
- MCC serves as a channel for interchange by building relationships that are mutually transformative.
- MCC strives for peace, justice and dignity of all people by sharing our experiences, resources and faith in Jesus Christ.

As stated on MCC's Web site (www.mcc.org), MCC India works with local partners such as "women's groups, farmers' cooperatives and government agencies. MCC sees its role as a facilitator, not as a controller of projects and programs."

Literacy as a tool for development work: Literacy usually is a key component in development efforts that empower women. Literacy experts describe "functional literacy" (Hunter & Harmon). A literate person is capable of much more than merely "drawing" the letters of her name (some groups in India would label a woman who can do this as literate) or simply reading signs and labels and simple instructions (Hunter & Harmon). When women can read newspaper and magazine articles, letters and editorials or published records announcing decisions made by their local government; when they can write their own letters explaining their needs, concerns or opinions; when they can write and give speeches at their monthly women's group meetings; when they can plan (on paper) and carry out a community awareness event or in other ways work together "to fulfill their own self-determined objectives as family and community members ... they are functionally literate" (Hunter and Harmon).

MCC India's partners that do literacy work with women usually do it in the context of village women's group activities.

It is this business of "fulfilling their own self-determined objectives" and of "applying their literacy skills to activities that mean something to them personally" that spells empowerment for women of all ages. MCC India supports this kind of activity.

Brazilian Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was one of the most influential educational thinkers of the late 20th century. He quickly became known internationally for his literacy training in Northeastern Brazil. Following Brazil's military coup in 1964, he was jailed by the new government and forced into political exile, which lasted 15 years (Paulo Freire).

In his best-known book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) he argues for a system of education that emphasizes learning as an act of culture and freedom. Freire's philosophy centers on consciousness raising, a process through which oppressed people collectively analyze the root

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

causes of their subordination and strategize actions to liberate themselves. Accordingly, learning is grounded in lived experience and leads to action for change (Hetland).

Freire strongly opposed what he saw going on in institutional educational settings (schools), and he called it "banking" education, in which passive learners have pre-selected knowledge deposited in their minds. When teachers and those in authority view learners as passive receptacles into which knowledge is deposited, the learners fail to see their own potential and are trapped in their imposed ignorance. They become incapable of criticizing social structures that stifle creativity, and the larger society is impoverished. This concept of education is especially harmful in underdeveloped cultures, where the already voiceless and disadvantaged are more firmly locked into a state of powerlessness, under the dominance of the subjugating powers above them (Paulo Freire).

In contrast to the above, Freire espoused a nonhierarchical and "more horizontal process of mutual learning, in which everyone is both teacher and learner. For participants, education is a path to collective emancipation, not merely a means to build skills for productive employment" (Hetland). When the powerless are invited into this kind of an educational environment, learning actually is "an act of culture and freedom," and the surrounding society benefits as well as the individual learner.

Freire's teachings make clear what well-done literacy and MCC India's mission have in common. Freire saw good education (or literacy) as a tool that the disadvantaged (previously illiterate) could wield to influence others and initiate change. His statements about the role of education in challenging the powers that be also define what happens when downtrodden women in India learn to read and write. MCC India's experience with partners that do literacy work with women validates Freire's statements.

MCC India's literacy work done in context of the women's groups: MCC India's partners that do literacy work with women usually do it in the context of village women's group activities. This pairing of the activities of women's self-help groups with literacy programs is an excellent combination; the purposes of both are met more effectively and readily. The neoliterate women become stronger assets to the group, the group motivates the women to function as literate people and the rewards for the women are multiplied. A natural and strong link connects literacy work and women's empowerment. Doing literacy work in the context of organized women's group activities takes advantage of that link.

The natural conversational give and take that goes on among women who share a common problem (which will occur when a group of women analyze their problems in a literacy class) and their natural networking tendencies contribute to a collaborative spirit, which easily becomes a vehicle for cooperative planning and coordinated action designed to rectify a wrong.

Freire's concepts—(1) learning is an act of freedom and (2) true education should help oppressed people collectively analyze the root causes of their subordination and plan actions to liberate themselves—ring true when compared with what happens in a women's group in which women learn how to read and write and are then challenged to use those skills to change their world.

When we teach oppressed Indian women functional literacy—how to read and write, how to be comfortable with words and dialogue in various forms, how to organize their thoughts, how to listen to other people's ideas, how to speak effectively, how to recognize poor logic and hidden agendas, how to work collaboratively—and when we do this in the context of a self-organized women's group, we help them become critical, creative, contributing members of society. They develop more self-confidence and have a greater sense of self-worth in the process. For these reasons—and because the goals of good literacy work mesh well with MCC India's goals—MCC India must partner with groups that work to empower women and girls through literacy training.

Twila Miller is a country representative for Mennonite Central Committee in India. This article is adapted from a paper she wrote for the course Integrated Literacy Instruction taught last summer by Donavan Steiner of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

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Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

AMBS window

Summer 2006
Volume 16 Issue 3

2 **Twenty-five receive degrees and certificates**

5 **Alumni awards honor longtime educators**

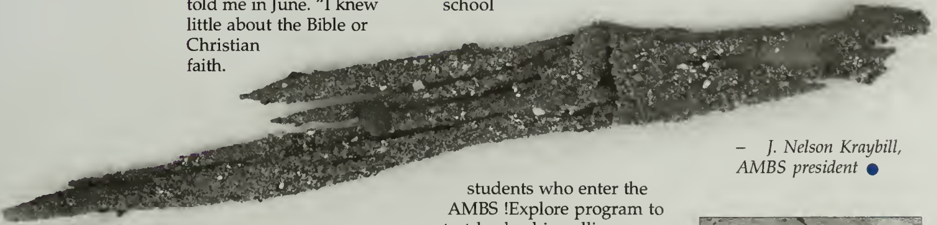
7 **Commencement**

Fulgurites formed at AMBS

A *fulgurite* is a crusty, tubular rock formation created when lightning strikes sandy soil. Enormous heat from a lightning bolt fuses sand into underground spikes of glass-like rock.

Several days before AMBS commencement in May, dozens of fulgurites were revealed as builders excavated on campus. Sometime in years past, awesome power from above surged through sandy soil where the new library and campus center soon will stand.

"I came to AMBS as a brand new believer," a United Methodist minister named Catherine Koziatek told me in June. "I knew little about the Bible or Christian faith. During the years I studied at the seminary, I became a minister."



The power of God's Spirit surged through the soil of her soul. Changes happened deep in her life, giving her inner conviction and skills that enable her to lead a congregation with confidence. Reverend Koziatek, pastor of New Salem United Methodist Church in Granger, Ind., is a fulgurite just as surely as those formations in the sand at AMBS.

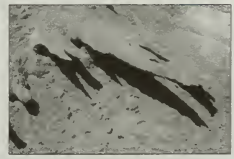
Nothing in the sandy soil at AMBS could form a fulgurite on its own. That power comes from above, and one cannot know for sure what shape will emerge. Each year AMBS has graduates who go on to show deep spiritual strength as scholars, missionaries, chaplains, teachers or pastors. Some take their theological training into business, social work or other vocations. Not only adults are transformed at AMBS. Each summer the power of God also touches high school students who enter the AMBS !Explore program to test leadership calling.

In June I had the privilege of presenting an AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Award to Paul Lederach of the Blooming Glen Mennonite Church in Pennsylvania. (See related story on page 5.)

A 1946 graduate from Goshen Biblical Seminary (one of two institutions that associated to form AMBS), Lederach has served the church for sixty years as pastor, overseer, scholar, administrator, author, editor and educator. When I handed Lederach the award, the congregation at Blooming Glen spontaneously rose for a standing ovation. That church knows a fulgurite when they see one.

Jesus once called Peter a rock and declared that he would build the church upon the fisherman's confession that Jesus was the Christ. Peter was a fulgurite, and the church today still is built upon men and women transformed by encounter with the risen Lord.

– *J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president* ●



Fulgurites, lying horizontally deep in the soil, were discovered during excavaction on the site of the new AMBS library and campus center.

2006 Graduates

Twenty-five earn degrees and certificates

Twenty-five students graduated from AMBS on May 19, 2006. Ten men and 15 women completed programs of study to receive degrees or certificates:

MDiv	Master of Divinity
MAPS	Master of Arts: Peace Studies
MATS	Master of Arts: Theological Studies
MACF	Master of Arts in Christian Formation
Cert	Certificate in Theological Studies

Find out more about the graduates here and at the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu.

Getaneh Ayele MDiv with a concentration in Mission and Evangelism. Will work as student pastor and teacher at Meserete Kristos College, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Getaneh and Sister Desta Hadero, his wife, have three children.

Keith Benner MATS with a concentration in Church History. Came to AMBS after earning a Bachelor of Science degree at Lancaster Bible College, Lancaster, Pa. Keith's parents are John and Barbara Benner of Chambersburg, Pa.

Annette Brill Bergstresser Cert. Will continue to serve as communications coordinator for Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, Goshen, Ind., and as a communications assistant for AMBS. She and Deron, her husband, have one daughter. She is a member of Faith Mennonite, Goshen, Ind., where Deron, a 2004 graduate, is pastor.

Evelyn A. Bertsche Cert. (Not pictured) While officially retired from pastoring, Evelyn continues to be actively involved church ministries. She and John, her husband, have two children. Evelyn is a member of Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Ill.

Leah Dawn Bueckert MDiv with a concentration in Pastoral Care and Counseling. Will do a yearlong Clinical Pastoral Education placement at Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne, Ind. Leah is a member of Covenant Mennonite Church in Winkler, Man.

Anita Mast Christian MDiv. Anticipates co-pastoring with her husband, Matthew Christian, a 2005 AMBS graduate. Anita is a member of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Melissa Fisher Fast MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Melissa is

Getaneh Ayele, Keith Benner, Annette Brill Bergstresser, Leah Dawn Bueckert

married to David Fisher Fast and is a member of Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Ryan Good MATS with a concentration in Theology and Ethics. Will work at the Center for Community Justice in Elkhart, Ind. Ryan is married to Hannah Dueck. He is a member of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Rosalie Thiessen Grove Cert. Pursuing an office position. Rosalie is originally from Manitoba, living in several communities there before making her home in Elkhart. She is a member of Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

(continued on p. 4)

Bwanawetu Jinsi lilivyo tukufu

Mary E. Klassen

For the commencement service, the sanctuary of College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., was surrounded with the words, "O Lord, our sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth," in languages spoken by graduates. Psalm 8 was the theme scripture chosen for the service by Dr. Joseph Martin, commencement speaker.

Anita Mast Christian, Melissa Fisher Fast, Ryan Good, Rosalie Thiessen Grove

Lois M. Harder MDiv. Will continue as co-pastor at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan., with Thomas, her husband. Lois and Tom, also a 2006 graduate, are the parents of three daughters.

Thomas L. Harder MDiv. Will continue as co-pastor of Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan., with Lois, his wife. They are the parents of three daughters. His parents are Leland and Bertha Harder, both graduates of Mennonite Biblical Seminary and former faculty members.

Elizabeth Johnson-George MDiv. Especially appreciated enriching her understanding of evangelism, pastoral care and Anabaptism. She and Jacob George, her husband, are the parents of one child. Elizabeth is a member of Faith Church of the Nazarene, in Tulsa, Okla.

Mary Etta King MACF. Will continue working with the Congregational and Ministerial Leadership team of Mennonite Church USA and as a spiritual director. She and Linford, her husband, have two adult sons and a daughter-in-law. Mary Etta is a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

Emily Knapp MDiv. Pursuing a bivocational ministry assignment. Emily has one daughter and two grandsons. She is a member at First United Methodist Church, Mishawaka, Ind.

Changyo Ko MDiv. Will return to South Korea with his wife, Sunran Hwang. They will live a devotional life among the poor farmers of their community.

Moses Mugweru Maina MAPS. Will pursue further training in peace studies, conflict analysis and conflict resolution. In the future he hopes to establish a peace center in Nairobi. Moses will marry his fiancée, Ruth Wainaina, this summer.

Brenda Hostetler Meyer MDiv. Will continue to pastor at Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Brenda and her husband Richard have three children. She is a daughter of Darrel Hostetler, a 1976 AMBS graduate, and Marion Hostetler of Goshen.

Jeffrey M. Miller MATS. Pursuing work in the field of mediation. He is a member of Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan.

Joel Miller MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Joel and Abbie, his wife, have one daughter. He is a member of Jubilee Mennonite Church in Bellefontaine, Ohio.

(continued on p. 6)

Lois Harder, Tom Harder, Elizabeth Johnson, Mary Etta King, Emily Knapp

Alumni awards honor longtime educators in the church

The 2006 Alumni Ministry and Service Awards are being presented to two longtime educators, Marion G. Bontrager and Paul M. Lederach, this summer.

Marion G. Bontrager has served on the faculty of Hesston (Kan.) College for more than 30 years. One of his most noteworthy tasks there was developing the course, "Introduction to Biblical Literature." This is a required course for all students, so he has helped more than 2,500 students to understand the biblical story and make it their own.

Marion studied at Hesston College and earned a B.A. from Goshen College, then in 1963 a B.D. from Goshen Biblical Seminary. In 1996 he completed additional requirements to convert the B.D. to an MDiv.

Prior to his Hesston College position, which he still holds, Marion served as a youth minister and taught at the high school level. During the time he served Ohio and Eastern Mennonite Conferences as youth minister, he started the first Bible Quiz Teams in the Mennonite Church, an effort that continues.

Paul M. Lederach, as an editor and administrator at Mennonite Publishing House, helped launch the first graded Sunday school materials and later was executive director of the Foundation Series. He also served as president of Mennonite Board of Education for seven years.

Following his work for the denominational agencies, Paul held leadership and pastoral roles in the Allegheny and Franconia Mennonite Conferences.

Paul was ordained to the ministry in 1944 in the Franconia Mennonite Conference, earned a B.A. from Goshen College, a Th.B. from Goshen Biblical Seminary in 1946, an M.R.E. from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and a D.Ed. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Thanks to a generous gift to AMBS from Paul and Mary Lederach, AMBS is able to host the Lederach Preaching Lectureship. ●

Photos provided

Two educators are the 2006 recipients of the AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Awards: Marion G. Bontrager of Hesston, Kan., and Paul M. Lederach of Lansdale, Pa.

Changyo Ko, Moses Maina, Brenda Hostetler Meyer, Jeffrey Miller, Joel Miller

Brad Roth MDiv. Will serve as pastor of Warden (Wash.) Mennonite Church, a congregation committed to crossing boundaries of language and culture. Brad and Lici Sertzen Roth have one son. Brad is a member of Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.

Lois Siemens MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry position. She is a member of Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C.

Shannon Stringer MDiv. Will be commissioned as a probationary elder in the Northern Indiana United Methodist Conference and will serve as pastor at Saint Joseph United Methodist Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. Shannon and David, her husband, have two sons.

Linda Stull-Lipps MDiv. Will serve as a pastor. Linda and David, her husband, have one daughter. Linda is a member of the West Michigan Conference of the United Methodist church.

Emily Toews MDiv with a concentration in Pastoral Care and Counselling. Will do a yearlong Clinical Pastoral Education placement in South Bend, Ind. She is a member of North Leamington United Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont.

Curtis Weaver MACF. Will work with !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth at AMBS over the summer. He and Karin, his wife, have two children. He currently is a member of Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Lancaster, Pa. ●

Faculty honor graduates

Each year the AMBS faculty present awards to students for outstanding work in each department of study. The 2006 recipients are as follows:

History and Theology department awards:

Keith Benner: MATS in Christian History
Ryan Good: MATS in Theology and Ethics
Brad Roth: Master of Divinity

Church and Ministry department awards:

Leah Dawn Bueckert: Pastoral Care and Counseling
Joel Miller: Pastoral Ministry
Shannon Stringer: Pastoral Leadership
Curtis Weaver: Youth Ministry

Bible department awards:

Anita Mast Christian: Gertrude Roten award in Greek exegesis
Brenda Hostetler Meyer: Millard Lind award in Old Testament interpretation
Tom Harder: Howard Charles award in New Testament interpretation
Melissa Fisher Fast: Jacob J. Enz award in Hebrew exegesis ●

Bradley Roth, Lois Siemens, Shannon Stringer, Linda Stull-Lipps, Emily Toews, Curtis Weaver

Commencement

Lead by listening

"Your ability to communicate—speaking and listening—will determine your gift of healing," a medical doctor told the graduates of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in the commencement address.

Joseph B. Martin, dean of the Harvard University medical school, compared his role with that of seminary graduates. "We are the principle professions—physician and pastor or counselor—where the patient or church member expects to discover trust and compassion and where they can be assured of confidentiality."

Dr. Martin then enumerated five quotients, or measurements, of effective leadership. Beginning with the standard IQ, he acknowledged that their intelligence quotient was an important measure, but it alone was not sufficient for good leadership.

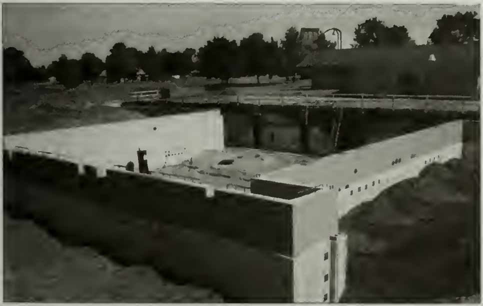
The next essential quality is EQ, emotional quotient, which includes the ability to understand another's position and empathize and the curiosity to want to understand others. HQ, humor or happiness quotient, is the ability to view life as a great adventure. The fourth is JQ, judgment quotient, arising from integrity and honesty and manifest in fairness and the ability to know when to act. Finally GQ, generosity quotient, includes the ability to forgive and forget and to find joy and satisfaction in the success of others.

In addition to both M.D. and Ph.D. degrees, Dr. Martin holds a Bachelor of Science in Bible from Eastern Mennonite University, reflecting a year of study in which he focused on seminary-type courses.

Concluding his address, Dr. Martin invited graduates and the entire gathering to read together the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. It is like a "Hippocratic Oath for the leadership you are undertaking," he said to the graduates. ●

Mary E. Klassen

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Commencement speaker Joseph B. Martin talks with graduate Bradley Roth before the service on Friday, May 19. Martin, who is dean of the Harvard medical school, is a member of Mennonite Church of Boston where Roth attended before coming to AMBS.


Mary E. Klassen

Construction began on the new AMBS library and campus center in April. Visible here are the walls of the extended basement, the previous underground room, and the current library facility, with the chapel and bell tower in the back. The double doors at the upper right are where the new facility will connect to Waltner Hall. At www.ambs.edu, select "Library and campus center construction" in the lower left corner and then the link to the webcam view to watch progress.

Campaign Report

next Generation
AMBS Fund for Church Leadership

The current emphasis in the Next Generation campaign is to complete funding for the new AMBS library and campus center. To find out more, see **www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.**

	Goal	Received (US dollars) 6.12.06
Library and campus center	8,104,000	$6,522,000

Panorama

!Explore encourages teens to explore ministry

!Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth will involve 30 youth this summer. Through a three-week group session and five weeks working with a pastor in their home settings, these youth will be encouraged to listen for God's call in their future work. The 2006 participants are named below with their congregations and the locations of the congregations.

Group 1

Jer'el Blocker, Oxford Circle Philadelphia, Pa.
Jessica Dyck, Poole, Milverton, Ont.
Annete Gingerich, West Union, Parnell, Iowa
Hefzi-ba Guzman, Iglesia Menonita Del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.
Patrice Harris, Calvary Community, Harrisonburg, Va.
David Horst, College, Goshen, Ind.
Julianne McDonald, Church of the Overcomer, Chester, Pa.
Evan Miller, Wooster Mennonite, Wooster, Ohio
Annali Murray, Martins Mennonite, Orrville, Ohio
Sara Padilla, Iglesia Menonita Del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.
Grace Schrock-Hurst, Park View, Harrisonburg, Va.
Lydia Yoder Short, East Union, Kalona, Iowa
Emily Taylor, Kern Road, South Bend, Ind.
Eric Yoder, Ridgeview, Narvon, Pa.
Nate Yoder, Kalona, Kalona, Iowa

Leaders:
Lana Miller, student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary
Saulo Padilla, student at AMBS

Group 2

Sam Adams, First, Sugarcreek, Ohio
Andrea Bowman, Zion, Archbold, Ohio
Maria Byler, Assembly, Goshen, Ind.
Angela Dueck, Leamington, Leamington, Ont.
Sara Erb, Steinmann, Tavistock, Ont.
Rachel Friesen, Paoli, Paoli, Ind.
Sarah Garland, Bergthal, Didsbury, Alb.
Sae Jin Lee, Hively Avenue, Elkhart, Ind.
Carrie Lehn, North Leamington United, Leamington, Ont.
Scott Litwiller, Hopedale, Hopedale, Ill.
Megan Miller, Kalona Kalona, Iowa
Kara Mishler, Shore, Shipshewana, Ind.
Eli Passage, Akron, Akron, Pa.
Jacob Schlabach, Faith, Saint Paul, Minn.
Katie Yantzi, East Zorra, Tavistock, Ont.

Leaders:
Tamara Shantz, student at Yale Divinity School
Jonathan Neufeld, church planting in Winnipeg, Man.

Mary E. Klassen

Faculty who authored or edited books that were published during the 2005–2006 year are Jacob Elias, Walter Sawatsky, Rebecca Slough, Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider, Arthur Paul Boers, Marlene Kropf, Art McPhee, June Alliman Yoder and Willard Swartley. Not pictured is Perry Yoder, professor emeritus.

For a complete list of books, journals and articles published during the year, see www.ambs.edu/php/academics/aca_writings.php.

Alumni News

Amanda (Mandy) Yoder (Master of Divinity 2003) was ordained by Indiana-Michigan Conference on April 30 at First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis, Ind., where she is associate pastor.

C. Norman Kraus (Bachelor of Divinity 1951 and former professor) is author of *Using Scripture in a Global Age: Framing Biblical Issues,* copublished by Cascadia and Herald Press. This is Volume 24 in the Institute of Mennonite Studies Occasional Papers.

David B. Miller (Master of Divinity 1993), received a Doctor of Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga. His project is entitled *The Missional Church and the End of Christian Social Ethics: Reassessing, Remembering, Rehearsing.* He continues as pastor of University Mennonite Church in State College, Pa., where he has served since August 1997.

Summer 2006
Volume 16 Issue 3

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen
Graduate group photos: Steve Echols

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite.*

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517-1999
574 295-3726
www.ambs.edu

A lesson at the food pantry

A woman teaches a giver about asking forgiveness.

by Sheri Hartzler

For the past 13 years I have spent Wednesday nights at Patchwork Pantry, an ecumenically run food pantry housed at my church, Community Mennonite in Harrisonburg, Va. The pantry serves around 150 families each month.

One night in late August, a middle-aged woman I'll call Kim came to the pantry. It was a hot, busy night, with the line of those waiting for food stretching far down the hallway. I knew it would be a long night.

During the summer, many friends of the Pantry donate large quantities of garden produce, and this night two tables groaned with tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and even bouquets of flowers. Clients were asked to wait until after their interview before getting produce.

Kim had come early, finding a place within the first half dozen people in line, the better to have first crack at the fresh produce.

We opened up, and within 10 minutes Kim came storming across the room, demanding an explanation for the delay in getting to the interview table. She was certain all the "good stuff" was being taken while she waited.

I explained that she would be next, that we had a large supply of produce and there would certainly be enough for her to have her choice of vegetables when she got to the table. I even told her to get her produce immediately instead of waiting for her interview if she was concerned.

But nothing I said made any difference. She was angry. She sought out others who were in charge of the work that evening and gave them the same complaint. Finally, after eventually getting her interview and her vegetables, she complained one last time, that she only had rotten vegetables to choose from.

I was ready to tell her she didn't have to get food at the pantry anymore if it wasn't satisfactory. Why couldn't she be grateful for the free food? Here we were working hard to make it available and all she could do was complain. I told all my friends and family about the complaining client.

A month passed. Kim came back to the pantry, again arriving early. She came directly to the kitchen where we worked and with tears in her eyes asked for our forgiveness. "I worried about this all month," she said. "I was wrong to be so upset last time I was here. I should not have complained. I was terrible."

I was dumbfounded. I told her I assumed she was having a bad day that day, and she said, "It wasn't just a bad day. It was a bad month. But I had no right to treat you that way."

I assured Kim of forgiveness and wondered if I would have had the courage to do what she did.

I had to think of Ephesians 4:32 (NIV), which says, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Being the one to do the forgiving is easier than asking for forgiveness, at least for me.

In the musical "Live at Jacob's Ladder" by Ted & Lee and Ken Medema, Jacob asks Esau, "What do I have to do to gain your forgiveness?" And Esau replies, "Just ask."

Kim did just that. When she walked out the door that night, she told me how much better she felt.

How quick am I to ask forgiveness for those short words that are said in frustration and sometimes anger—to my husband, my kids, my co-workers? I am so often tempted to assume that if enough time passes, it will be forgotten, so there's no need to ask forgiveness.

How quick am I to ask forgiveness for those short words that are said in frustration and sometimes anger?

Often I have said I continue to do this work at the pantry because it reminds me to be ever grateful for the things in my life I too often take for granted: the ability to hold a job that pays enough money for groceries and much more and that provides health insurance so that unexpected medical bills don't cause financial disaster. While I gain much from this reminder, I know that most Wednesday evenings I think of myself as the giver. Kim reminded me that sometimes we learn more from those we serve than we would ever expect.

I only see Kim once a month for a few minutes. She didn't need to ask my forgiveness in order to continue to get food. She asked because she knew she had done wrong and wanted to wipe the slate clean. I will greet Kim the next time she comes to the pantry in a new way—as a person who has asked for and received my forgiveness. I wonder what else she has to teach me?

Sheri Hartzler is director of Patchwork Pantry in Harrisonburg, Va.

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Honor our Native ancestors

Melanie Zuercher is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Just about exactly 126 years ago, "foreign" mission work by North American Mennonites began. On May 18, 1880, Samuel S. Haury and his young bride Susanna Hirschler Haury arrived at the Darlington Indian Agency in what is now El Reno, Okla., but then was Indian Territory, not part of the United States.

Less than 12 years earlier, in November 1868, General George Armstrong Custer and the Seventh Cavalry had killed Black Kettle, a traditional Cheyenne peace chief, along with his wife, Medicine Woman and others from their small village on the banks of the Washita River, about 100 miles west of Darlington. Sixteen years later, in 1896, was when Lawrence Hart, a spiritual descendant of Black Kettle, now dates the founding of the first Mennonite church in Indian Territory.

Lawrence—himself a peace chief, a Mennonite pastor, an ex-Marine fighter pilot, a graduate of Mennonite educational institutions, a loving father and grandfather, a force to be reckoned with in certain Washington corridors where repatriation of Indian remains is at issue—is a bridge between several worlds. At the Mennonite Historical Committee conference held in Clinton, Okla., March 30-April 2, "Journey from Darlington: Cheyenne, Arapaho, Mennonite," Lawrence was a bridge between histories. Standing under an indoor facsimile of a brush arbor where the first Mennonite worship services were held 110 years ago, he prayed in English and Cheyenne and spoke with gratitude of Mennonites who had ministered to his people, leading them down "the Jesus Road" two generations before his birth.

He is also a bridge to the future, though it may not be a Mennonite one. The height of Mennonite mission work in Indian Territory/Oklahoma was in the first 20 years of the 20th century, which saw the baptism of 500 people and establishment of six congregations. Today most of those churches have closed or are struggling against the almost insurmountable reality of a rural America sharply declining in terms of economy, population and hope. We may be witnessing in this generation the end of the original North American Mennonite mission. There is no obvious successor to Lawrence Hart as a spiritual leader with connections back to the 1880s and earlier.

Lawrence will live on in the pages of Raylene Hinz-Penner's forthcoming book from Cascadia Publishing, *Sacred Ground: The Journey of Lawrence Hart, Mennonite*. More important—and he would be the first to say so—his decades of work for reconciliation will live on through the Return to the Earth project (www.rfpusa.org/returntotheearth/index.html), especially if Mennonite congregations all over North America embrace with him a profound endeavor.

In 1990, the U.S. Congress passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which allows tribal governments to repatriate certain objects from universities and museums across the nation. Thousands of sacred objects and human remains are listed, starting in 1860. Any universities or museums that have ever received federal funds are mandated to follow NAGPRA.

In the mid-1990s, Lawrence served on the NAGPRA Review Committee, which drafted recommendations for the "disposition of culturally unidentifiable Native American human remains." Because of poor accession records, more than 110,000 remains have no tribal affiliation.

Through Return to the Earth, Mennonite Central Committee and 70 other faith-based groups will assist Indian tribes in burying these "culturally unidentifiable" remains in four regional cemeteries. One of them—the first to be dedicated, during the Journey from Darlington conference—will be located on the property of the Cheyenne Cultural Center, just outside Clinton.

Return to the Earth needs people to learn a story not found in public school texts or in most of our Mennonite history books. It also needs people to build cedar boxes to house, and sew linen cloths to wrap, the remains (in the majority of cases, these consist only of a skull).

The Cheyenne and Arapaho missions in Indian Territory/Oklahoma produced some of the first indigenous North American Mennonites. In some ways, these are the ancestors of us all. I pray that Mennonite congregations will join in honoring these ancestors, along with the legacy of the first North American Mennonite mission. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The man born blind and the person with bipolar disorder**—Leah Kabira
- **Giving our baby to God**—Jake Hallman

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Confession of faith nearly 11 years old

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary conference reviews its first decade.

In 1982, when the idea of a joint confession of faith for the former Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) started germinating, an MC committee advised in a report that a new such document should be "timeless!"

"With an exclamation point," presenter Susan Biesecker-Mast told a June 8-10 consultation on Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

After eight years of discernment and development, the confession was adopted by GC and MC delegates in 1995. Today it is the confession of faith of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, the successors to the denominations that first approved it. While the confession remains an essential faith document, it is not timeless, no matter the punctuation, consultation participants repeatedly said.

The consultation, "Holding Fast to the Confession of Our Hope," drew 142 people from 24 states and four provinces to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., to assess how Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective has served the church in the 11 years since it was adopted.

The consultation emphasized new ways of responding to a changing world. Issues such as megachurches, terrorism, urbanization, global economics, the growth of Islam and the mushrooming membership among people of color offer challenges not addressed by the confession. "In the end, a written confession can never live up to our hopes; it shouldn't have to, and we shouldn't make it," said Eileen Klassen Hamm, program director of Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan.

Nowhere has change been as acute as in Pacific Southwest Conference (PSC), where 20 of its 39 congregations have emerged in the past seven years. In Southern California, 95 percent of the membership is new to the Mennonite church, and 87 percent were born outside the United States.

Jeff Wright, a conference minister for PSC, said the confession is important for creating identity, which is essential for mission. "Without a clear identity, the church cannot discern her unique missionary call from God," he said. "Without a missionary impulse, our identity tends to dissolve into quasi-celebrations of the past."

The confession hasn't been as well received in some more traditional Mennonite areas. "Most of the time the confession of faith sits on my shelf, within arm's length, but alas, I have yet to read it cover to cover," said Ron Kennel, pastor of Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, a 150-year-old congregation in rural Elkhart County.

AMBS photo

Malinda Berry, doctoral student at Union Theological Seminary, New York, beginning a teaching assistantship at Goshen (Ind.) College, talks with Lois Barrett, Director, AMBS-Great Plains, North Newton, Kan.; assistant professor of theology and Anabaptist studies at AMBS; and one of three drafters of the 1995 Confession.

He said being Mennonite is less important to his congregation than being Christian. "It's not the Scriptures, which is the primary sourcebook for my people and me," Kennel said.

Mennonites have something wanted and needed by the world, participants repeatedly said. But a confession of faith, which helps define a body's distinctives, inherently puts its adherents at tension with people who are not Mennonite, argued April Yamasaki, pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C..

Helmut Harder, one of the primary authors of the confession, admitted not all members of the committee that prepared it were in agreement on everything. He said the document was meant to be a "summary statement" of the beliefs the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church had in common at the time they were exploring their merger.

A panel of "young scholars" criticized Article 19, "Family, Singleness and Marriage," but not just because of its position on homosexuality. Elaine Swartzentruber, a theology professor at Wake Forest University, wondered why familial relationships needed special attention. "Are they any different than any other relationship?" she asked.

The consultation included plenary addresses, panel discussions and presentations on topics such as congregational applications of the confession, discipline, peace, the Lord's Supper and disagreeing with the confession.—*Rich Preheim for AMBS*

Walk for life remembers those who died

Retracing migrant trail raises awareness about suffering, death in desert.

JoAnn Quintanilla

Something inside them says it doesn't matter what I go through, I have to get over there to better my life and better the life of my family.
—JoAnn Quintanilla

For the 75 miles of desert that separates the Mexican town of Sasabe from Tucson, Ariz., Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker Jodi Read walked. For mile upon mile, she carried a white cross bearing the name of María Ruby Aguilar Santiz, who was 22 years old when she died crossing the border in 2005.

As Read's feet ached, as temperatures soared above 100, as the desert stretched out before her with no water in sight, she thought of María. She wondered how her death had affected her family and how they are faring now without her.

"Does she have brothers and sisters?" Read said. "What's it like to have lost a sister, a daughter?"

Read was participating in "The Migrant Trail: We Walk For Life," sponsored by individuals and groups—including West Coast MCC and Christian Peacemaker Teams. The May 29-June 4 walk supported by water breaks, food and support vehicles raised awareness about immigrants who die in their attempts to cross miles of parched land to enter the United States.

Two West Coast MCC staff members, Read and JoAnn Quintanilla, and intern Rashawn Moore participated in the walk.

After a first day of four miles, the group often completed more than a dozen miles a day, beginning at dawn and finishing by around 1 p.m. Often, Quintanilla said, "all you could see was desert. Without a compass, you couldn't tell which way was north, east, west, south."

It is terrain that can be deadly. Temperatures hit 105 and 106 the last two days of the walk. Members of the walk calculated how much water they believed it would take to remain healthy, Quintanilla said. The total they came up with—14 gallons—is clearly far beyond what any one person could carry. People typically start out with two or maybe three gallons, she said.

Members of the walk had water brought to them and food provided. Unlike migrants, participants in this event could walk along roads and streets. They didn't have to try to stay under the cover of darkness, bumping into cactus as they dodged the border patrol.

"It was just a really powerful experience to be out there and to be humbled in a way," Read said. "We had so much food and water and things were [still] very difficult for us."

Read, who works with immigration and peace issues in Tucson, Ariz., and Quintanilla, who works with immigrants in Reedley, Calif., were struck by the determination it must take for immigrants to survive days in the desert.

"Something inside them says it doesn't matter what I go through, I have to get over there to better my life and better the life of my family," Quintanilla said.

The event began with a procession in Sasabe, a town across the Mexico border in the state of Sonora. Participants carried three caskets, representing the children, women and men who have died along the border.

As they walked, they saw scores of border patrol vehicles, Read said. The group also encountered a man crossing from Mexico into the United States.

Quintanilla said the man, who was in his 20s, had come from the town of Altar, just across the border, and was traveling to Washington state. When he encountered the group, he had been abandoned in the desert. He asked the group to contact border patrol, so he could return to Mexico.

"He didn't have the connections to keep going," Read said.

On the walk's final day, participants walked 6.7 miles into Tucson. After the silence of the desert, Read found herself struck by a driver shouting and cursing at the group as they crossed the road.

"It made me wonder what kind of welcome people coming into the country receive," she said.
—Marla Pierson Lester of Mennonite Central Committee

Planning begins for MWC Assembly 15

Alfred Neufeld, coordinator for 2009 gathering in Paraguay, answers questions.

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) accepted an invitation from its Paraguayan member churches to hold Assembly 15 in Asunción, Paraguay, July 13-19, 2009. According to Alfred Neufeld, Paraguayan Mennonites extended their invitation out of gratitude for the global Mennonite family.

Neufeld is the chair of the national coordinating committee for Assembly 15 and a faculty member at the Universidad Evangelica del Paraguay. Marcus Shantz worked for MWC as special projects coordinator from 1995 to 1997 leading up to and including Assembly 13 in Calcutta, India. Shantz talked with Neufeld in Pasadena, Calif., during MWC General Council meetings in March.

In the following interview, Neufeld reflects on plans for Assembly 15 and offers a sense of what visitors can expect.

Hosting a Mennonite World Conference assembly is a big undertaking. Why did the Paraguayan Mennonites offer to do this?

The international Mennonite community has always been supportive of Paraguay from the time that Mennonite refugees settled there. And since then, there has been a strong network of support from Mennonites around the world, through Voluntary Service, through Mennonite Central Committee, through cooperation with the First Nation settlements. So we do it out of gratitude, and we do it because we think it may have a positive impact on our churches and our public presence and witness.

How many different MWC member churches from Paraguay will be involved in hosting Assembly 15?

There are at least three major cultural groups that will be hosting the Assembly. Three MWC member churches belong to the First Nation peoples that started to join the Mennonite faith at the end of the 1940s.

There are also three conferences of immigrant background that still speak German in their churches: the Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Brethren Church and the Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood. They all immigrated to Paraguay at the same time 75 years ago, and they have had a fraternal working relationship. There are also two member conferences from the majority Spanish-speaking culture. They are the Paraguayan Mennonite Church and the Paraguayan Mennonite Brethren Church.

On the other hand, there are several groups that are not MWC members but with whom we have a fraternal relationship. There are also two emerging First Nations groups and Old Colony Mennonites who immigrated from Mexico. They have not been eager to establish a closer relationship with the other Anabaptist churches, but we will look for comfortable ways for them to be involved in the assembly.

Finally, there are some other emerging groups that have been doing mission and outreach. They are not yet officially part of MWC. They will all be supportive of the assembly.

Have Paraguayan Mennonites had the opportunity to cooperate to this extent in the past?

It's new and exciting for us to work as eight different conferences to host a major Mennonite event. But there has been a high level of inter-Mennonite cooperation in the history of Paraguay. I would also say there has been a low amount of conflict or division in our history. Nearly all these groups emerged out of missionary work in specific ethnic communities or from immigration. As far as I know, none of our Mennonite groups has emerged from a split or a conflict in Paraguay. So we have to understand that Paraguay is a country of refuge for a wide mosaic of different Mennonite groups. Service has helped unite us and has provided a platform of encounter for us.

What are your biggest concerns in hosting the assembly?

My main concern is that the program, the content, the themes really will provide renewal and shared vision. Of course, preparing for the assembly will require much cross-cultural fellowship. The national coordinating committee is as culturally diverse as you can imagine, and that will require a lot of grace and wisdom.

The nice thing is that there are strong fraternal feelings and a history of cooperation. But the social, educational, economic, and cultural differences among us are remarkable. And we will need prayer and wisdom to make this a joyful experience.

How much planning have you done so far?

We are just at the beginning of our planning. We have a national coordinating committee, which has met only twice. We are looking at two possible sites for hosting the assembly and will make a decision on that later this year. There has been an advertisement to hire a national coordinator, but [as of March] we have not held interviews.

What time of year will the assembly be held?

It will be winter in Paraguay. The weather will be unpredictable. If the wind blows from the south, it can be cold—very cold actually. If the wind comes from the north it will be as hot as summer. So visitors will have to prepare for all kinds of weather.—*Mennonite World Conference*

There has been a low amount of conflict or division in our history ... Paraguay is a country of refuge for a very wide mosaic of different Mennonite groups. —Alfred Neufeld

Domestic violence is focus for leaders

Pastor describes abuse she suffered in first marriage and response of church.

Mennonite church plants in Dallas are responding to the issue of domestic violence by exposing the injustice of abuse and learning about peace theology.

Esther Martinez is a survivor of domestic violence from her 20-year marriage. She feared for her life and what the violence would mean for her children. Desperate, Martinez approached the pastoral leaders at her church seeking help and guidance. They told her to stay in the marriage and have faith that God would change her situation.

"People kept telling me, 'Your faith is going to save him,'" Martinez says.

She stayed and the violence escalated.

"I thought walking away would be walking away from God," says Martinez. "When I walked away, I walked away from the church as well."

People kept telling me, 'Your faith is going to save him.' ... When I walked away, I walked away from the church as well.
—Esther Martinez

Martinez led a committee that planned the domestic violence workshop in San Antonio, Texas. South Central Mennonite Conference and Western District Conference hosted the event from March 31 to April 2. The workshop focused on the biblical teachings of a healthy gender identity relating to the degrading of women through domestic violence.

The workshop was open to church members, but it targeted church leaders in the Mennonite church plants from the area. There were 85 adult participants as well as about 20 children who took part in a similar children's event.

Speakers César Moya and Patricia Urueña, Mennonite Mission Network workers in Quito, Ecuador, focused on the equal participation of women in the church and how Bible interpretation produces violence toward women by men, church and society.

Marco Güete, associate conference minister of Western District and South Central conferences and a Mission Network urban ministry director, says Urueña "gave a woman's perspective on how women have been treated, particularly by male leaders in the church."

Martinez says some in the Hispanic community retain a sense of patriarchal supremacy that can be abused. According to Martinez, domestic violence is more prevalent among minorities and immigrants because many will not call the police.

Güete says, "People participated in small discussion groups, they responded back to the whole constituency on how they felt and also looked for solutions on how the church could become an agent of liberation for the women."

Marco Güete

Blanca Vargas (left), pastor of Comunidad de Vida Mennonite Church, San Antonio, Texas, and Patricia Urueña of Mennonite Mission Network

The Mennonite church plants are bringing in new members from all walks of life, and they bring their baggage with them, Martinez says. New members still have to be taught to accept the peace identity of the Anabaptist teachings.

"I would hope that someone who has been Mennonite for a long time, or a period of time, would embrace the peace witness in all areas of their life including the home," Martinez says.

The church that advised Martinez to stay in a threatening situation also contributed to her stress. Church leaders demeaned her concern by not taking it seriously and blamed her for wanting to leave her husband.

It took Martinez's second marriage to lead her back to the church after years of feeling like she had turned her back on God. She believes that it is the church that should reach out to the victims of domestic violence and provide options and support when possible.

Martinez said that if only someone had offered to help her it would have made leaving easier. She had no place to stay and no money to support her children. Leaving did not look like an option until it was the only option.

"The injustice I suffered, I know God was unhappy with that, it saddened his heart," she says.

The workshop trained individuals within the church to recognize the characteristics of victims and abusers. If the church can expose domestic violence as a sin, victims are released of blame and congregations can provide proper support.

Speakers advised congregations to know local help centers, counselors and shelters before they are needed. "The victim has to decide whether to stay or leave the situation," Martinez says, "but the church should provide support and help them see their options."—*Rebekah Paulson of Mennonite Mission Network*

Lancaster students learn about prisons

Respond to overcrowding, recidivism, inequities in criminal justice system

"Go Directly to Jail" had new meaning for 73 Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School (LMH) sociology students who visited Lancaster County Prison in early May. The prison houses 1,200 inmates with approximately 450 released back into the community each month.

The field trip, arranged by LMH alumnus and current county commissioner Dick Shellenberger, followed a sociology unit in which Lancaster Mennonite students studied issues facing the criminal justice system. The prison visit gave them a firsthand look at issues such as overcrowding, recidivism (80 percent for Lancaster County), inequities within the system and possible reforms.

After the visit, students wrote about their experiences. Following are excerpts:

"The thing that affected me the most," wrote Monica Keeney, "was how dehumanized the people became—not that they were treated like animals or chained to walls … but the basic stripping away of their identity as an individual and becoming one more inmate among thousands. …

"How could anyone be rehabilitated when no one gives them individual attention unless they are doing something wrong? If they had the opportunity to be part of a program that would teach them skills in getting a job, perhaps the recidivism rate would be much lower."

Brittany Mellinger wrote: "One thing that shocked me was that the inmates were only allowed to be out of their cells for three hours every day. I had read about administrative segregation and special housing units where prisoners are only allowed for one hour a day, but I had assumed that everyone else got significantly more free time. Even if an inmate had a roommate, the limited social interaction must stunt their social and coping skills.

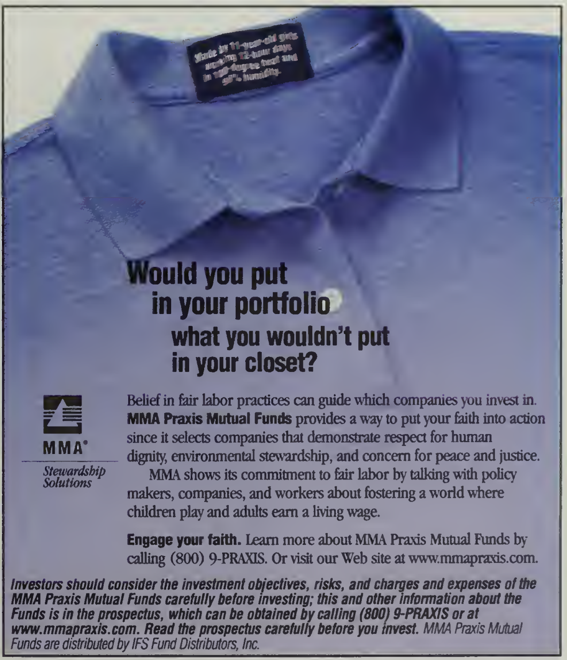
"Ninety-five percent of criminals actually are released back into society, and if we do not give them the tools to make better choices, we are in essence condemning them into coming back to jail. … It is not only the people in jail that are affected by the system, but their friends, families, and neighbors."

Emily Rhinehart wrote: "I was the most afraid when we entered the women's pod. Looking at the figures coming toward the doors and seeing their sad eyes looking out at me is an image I will never forget. Not being able to see any hope or personality, almost like they weren't human, made me feel sad for them."

Courtesy photo

Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School sociology teacher Sheri Wenger, right, prepares her students for their visit to the Lancaster County Prison.

Jon Spicher wrote: "In viewing this prison overall and from what I have learned from this class concerning the prison system in the United States, I cannot help but think there is another method of reversing the deviant actions of criminals. … Hopefully the general public in cooperation with groups like Justice and Mercy Inc. (a nonprofit, Christian-based agency in Pa.) will be able to initiate legislation to begin widespread prison reform throughout the United States."—*Fern Clemmer for Lancaster Mennonite Schools*



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Ontario church celebrates 200 years

Schneider family left Pennsylvania in 1806 looking for religious freedom.

When Mennonites Yoch and Maria Schneider went to Canada from Franklin County, Pa., in 1806, they settled near what is now Bloomingdale, Ont., on the east side of the Grand River.

Traveling with their eight children, nine horses, cattle and sheep, and several other families, the Schneiders hoped to find land enough to provide farms for their children and to find a government willing to respect their right to military exemption.

By 1826, the Schneider family had grown too large for the house church to continue, so a meeting house was built on the site of today's church large enough to seat 300 people.

Celebrating 200 years of worshiping and praising God, the 2006 Bloomingdale Mennonite congregation decided to have their own house church as a reminder of its heritage. Members met in individual homes on a windy, snowy February Sunday for worship and a simple meal. Ten to 15 people met at each of five homes, making the modern house churches likely smaller than those that occurred at the Schneider home in the early years.

Worship was organized according to information on the early services, with hymn singing and a sermon from the time read by a local member. Others gave historical introductions. Women were allowed to speak and even to wear slacks.

The Scripture was read first from the King James Version and then from the New Revised Standard Version, which was easier to understand. For prayers, kneeling was sometimes difficult to do, but all tried. Discussions followed the sermon, and all groups recognized a blessing in the sharing of thoughts in such a setting.

No restrictions were made on separating women and men at the entry of the home, but one group found the hymn singing went better when they had the men and the women stand and face each other.

In keeping with an old custom, another group chose their sermon reader by drawing straws. This reader wore a jacket that had belonged to Pastor Stevanus, who served the Bloomingdale congregation for nearly 40 years.

One group enjoyed its house church experience so much that participants thought about opening a permanent church there. But when they recalled the 200-year history of Bloomingdale Mennonite Church, they decided to be grateful for the chance to envision what their forefathers experienced.

Bloomingdale Mennonite Church will hold its bicentennial celebration Oct. 7-8.—*Martha Snyder for Bloomingdale Mennonite Church*

Mennonites in Siberia

In late May and early June, Tourmagination took a group to Siberia for the first time. This photo was taken during a meal with Siberian hosts at Neudachino, one of eight Mennonite villages visited.

"The Mennonites in Siberia often feel they are forgotten by the total Mennonite family," says Tourmagination's president, Wilmer Martin. Martin and Ben and Erna Falk served as hosts for the tour.

The church was persecuted during Stalin's regime; it recently celebrated 100 years of existence in Siberia. According to Martin, there are over 500 locations where Mennonites live in villages. In the Omsk region, there are more than 40 villages that have Mennonite congregations—registered as Baptists for legal reasons.

"The church never ceased to exist," says Martin, "even though … many preachers were arrested and put into prison."—*Tourmagination*

Courtesy photo

Bible study author learns about time

Melissa Miller has written new Bible study guide on stewardship of time.

When Melissa Miller began to write a Bible study guide on women and the stewardship of time, little did she know she would be the first student of its lessons.

Miller, Canadian author of *My Times Are in Your Hands: Women and the Stewardship of Time*, says the project taught her much about how her writing was in God's hands—even though deadlines loomed and time ran thin. She wrote the 62-page book's lessons on behalf of Mennonite Women USA and Canadian Women in Mission. They coproduce a Bible study guide each year as part of their ministries to women's groups and individuals. This 2006 study, printed by Mennonite Press in Newton, Kan., is the first of a trilogy on the stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

"I welcomed the chance to write a Bible study on time, to explore biblical wisdom for 21st-century North American Christians," says Miller, who lives in Winnipeg and is a family life consultant, pastoral counselor and author.

"Neither clock-watching nor attention to the seasons enabled me to put words to the page," she says. "I needed a miracle. Thank God, who provides such miracles. In an unusually quiet Christmas week, most of this study flowed from my fingers, an astounding bout of creativity. I was awed by the Spirit's generous gift."

Miller's struggles strengthened and enriched her work, as they provided examples of how God's grace and wisdom can shape one into being a better steward of time. Included in the guide are 10 lessons, a concluding worship and a 10-minute devotional on each lesson plus Christmas and Easter programs for group events. Cover artist is Marj Engle, Salem, Ore., and book designer is Gwen Stamm, Scottdale, Pa.

Rhoda Keener, executive director for Mennonite Women USA, and Erna Neufeldt, Canadian Women in Mission president, endorse Miller's work and affirm how she conveys a sense of God's grace for maneuvering through a society plagued by "hurry sickness."

"I think this study speaks to women's daily lives," Keener says.

To order the Bible study guide in the United States, send $7 payable to MW USA, to the MW USA office at 722 Main St., Newton, KS 67114. For more information, call 800-794-5101, ext. 227; office@MennoniteWomenUSA.org.

Mennonite Women USA also offers a companion piece, a seminar leader's guide, "Is There a Cure for Hurry Sickness?" written by Marlene Bogard, minister of Christian worship for Western District Conference in Mennonite Church USA.

It's free by email; for each paper copy enclose $2 for postage and handling.—*Laurie Oswald Robinson, editor for Mennonite Women USA and* Timbrel

I think this study speaks to women's daily lives.
—Rhoda Keener

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"For The Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

CALENDAR

Bloomingdale Mennonite Church, Ontario, Can., ***bicentennial celebration***, Oct. 7 and 8, 2006.

Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society, second ***Illinois Mennonite Immigrant Series Day***, July 22. Registration begins at 8 a.m., programs run from 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. This year will focus on the family of Andreas and Elizabeth Eiman Ropp. Registration fee of $10 individual, $15 per family. Lunch fee $8.50 adult, $4.50 children ages 4-12. For more information, contact Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center, 675 State Route 116, Metamora, IL 61548; phone 309-367-2551. Email imhc@mtco.com.

Mennonite Health Assembly, March 29-April 1, 2007, Pittsburgh, Pa. Theme will be ***"Mission-Driven Ministry."*** For more information, contact Mennonite Health Assembly, 234 South Main Street, Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46526; phone 574-534-9689.

WORKERS

Eash, Ted, began June 4 as interim pastor at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Hartzler, Rachel Nafziger, was licensed May 28 for ministry in Central District Conference and installed as lead pastor at Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Hostetler, Marian Brendle, was licensed June 11 for specific ministry as pastor to seniors at North Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Koontz, Gayle Gerber, was ordained June 4 for her work as a professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Ordination took place at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Kuhns, Dennis, will be installed July 9 as pastor at Lynside Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Pa.

Perrett, Brett, began June 15 as pastor of Stuarts Draft (Va.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bergey, Tess Ruth, June 1, to Mark and Darla Balmer Bergey, Sellersville, Pa.

Crabtree, Maddox Lee, June 14, to Jeremy and Nancy Mueller Crabtree, Wichita, Kan.

Eberly, Olivia Noel, May 22, to Peter and Natalie Lehman Eberly, Harrisonburg, Va.

Foote, Jaden Ray, June 9, to T.J. and Raina Stoltzfus Foote, Inola, Okla.

Graber-Nofziger, Ivan Lee, April 7, to Jon Nofziger and Katie Graber, Columbus, Ohio.

Kauffman, Lawson Edward, June 8, to Travis and Kristen Graber Kauffman, Goshen, Ind.

Koehn, Joshua Scott, April 11, to Chris and Amber Friesen Koehn, North Newton, Kan.

Landis, Samuel Elias, June 6, to Ken and Rosetta Stoltzfus Landis, Crohgan, N.Y.

Lockridge, Trevor Lee, April 5, to Daniel Lockridge and Tara Henderson, Stuarts Draft, Va.

Rafferty, Rile Nicolle, May 25, to Jim and Michelle Troyer Rafferty, Uniontown, Ohio.

Roth, Cahle Jordan, June 5, to Brian and Lynne Borton Roth, Archbold, Ohio.

Ruebke, Kate Lillie, June 12, to Tim and Amy Myers Ruebke, Harrisonburg, Va.

Schondel, Travis William, April 8, to Andy and Rebecca Gentry Schondel, Rittman, Ohio.

Shank, Micah Roth, May 30, to Josh and Sarah Roth Shank, Harrisonburg, Va.

Smith, Josiah Paul, May 23, to George and Angela Leslie Smith, Warsaw, Ind.

Steiner, Riley Dawn, May 29, to Todd and Angela Mast Steiner, Dalton, Ohio.

Taylor, James David, April 18, to Robbie and Kathryn Harner Taylor, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Thomas, Matthew J., April 7, to Scott and Dawn Burkholder Thomas, Goshen, Ind.

Tolle, Rylin Nathaniel, June 2, to George and Kristian Sawyer Tolle, Wichita, Kan.

Weaver, Logan Scott, May 27, to Matthew and Michelle Nussbaum Weaver, Harrisonburg, Va.

Wolf, Kyia Nicole Sejuti, Sept. 6, 2005, received for adoption March 23 by Kevin and Tara Zuercher Wolf, Pendleton, Ind.

Yoder, Isaac Ray, May 3, to Jeff and Lisa Swarzendruber Yoder, Hesston, Kan.

Yoder, Braylon Robert, June 16, to Ben and Jewel Troyer Yoder, Elkhart, Ind.

Zerger, Justin Jonathan, June 6, to Jonathan and Heather Esau Zerger, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRIAGES

Armer/Zook: Curtis Armer, Lancaster, Pa., and Ashley Zook, Lancaster, May 6 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa.

Atkins/Rolon: Sade Atkins, Killeen, Texas, and Miguel Rolon, Columbus, Ohio, June 10 at Sharon Woods Baptist Church, Columbus.

Brubacher/Harley: Jesse Brubacher, Walton, Kan., and Sharyn Harley, New Paris, Ind., April 22 at Krause Estate, Lawrence, Kan.

Ehst/Shank: Lisa Renee Petersheim Ehst, Bally, Pa., and Joel Richard Shank, Harrisonburg, Va., May 20 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

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Hoffman/Liechty: Krissy Hoffman, Holgate, Ohio, and Kent Liechty, Archbold, Ohio, June 10 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Keller/Maggio: Randy Keller, Decatur, Ill, and Melinda Maggio, Washington, Ill., May 20 at Metamora (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Kern/Rice-Smucker: Joel Kern, Goshen, Ind., and Naomi Rice-Smucker, Goshen, May 27 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Lancaster/Via: Ben Lancaster, Waynesboro, Va., and Marlana Via, Lyndhurst, Va., June 3 at Lyndside Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst.

Landis/Smith: Deana Landis, Goshen, Ind., and Robert Smith, Andover, Ma., May 27 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

DEATHS

Coon, Helen Neufeld, 72, Topeka, Ind., died May 30. Spouse: Robert R. Coon. Parents: John and Catherine Wiens Neufeld. Children: Russell, Catherine Bitkofer, Dorothy; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 at Topeka Mennonite Church.

Greaser, Robert A., 80, Hatfield, Pa., died April 29. Spouse: Eva Godshall Greaser. Parents: LeRoy and Alma Alderfer Greaser. Child: Jonathan; one grandchild. Funeral: May 3 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Jantzen, Richard W., 83, Topeka, Kan., died May 20. Spouse: Hilda L. Penner (deceased). Children: Steven, Karen Zeug; five grandchildren. Funeral; May 25 at Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka.

Koehn, Jacob C., 97, Goessel, Kan., died May 25. Spouse: Irma Voth Koehn. Parents: Cornelius and Aganetha Goertz Koehn. Children: Margaret Hiebert, John, Linda Buller; eight grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 30 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Landes, Henry A., 87, Souderton, Pa., died June 12. Spouse: Anna Derstine Landes. Parents: Isaiah and Susan Alderfer Landes. Children: Larry D., Merrill D., Henry D., Joanne D. Hostetter; 14 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 15 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Lehman, Marvin, 86, Kidron, Ohio, died May 24. Spouse: Oleta Lehman. Parents: Simon and Ida Lehman. Children: Joann Erb, John (deceased); two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 27 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Miller, Kenneth, 79, Wayland, Iowa, died May 26. Spouse: Verlee Miller. Parents: Iva and Lucille Miller. Children: Malcolm, Meredith, LuJean Bennett, Kim Sheetz, Kelly Smith, Tina Garrett; seven grandchildren. Funeral: May 30 at Wayland Mennonite Church.

Miller, Robert Clarence, 72, Davidsville, Pa., died June 3. Spouse: Dorothy Miller Kegg. Parents: Clarence Miller and Flora M. Turner. Children: Cheryl Moore, Robert C., Linda Moore; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 5 at Carpenter Park Mennonite Church, Davidsville.

Moser, Lawson E., 46, Castorland, N.Y., died May 28 in a motorcycle accident. Spouse: Leslie Kloster Moser. Parents: Marvin and Belva Zehr Moser. Children: Tristyn, Tierney, Taylor, Morgan,Tyler. Funeral: June 1 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

Pauls, Irvin "Irv" A., 80, Buhler, Kan., died June 13. Spouse: Louise Schroeder Pauls. Children: Gaylene Van Horn, Shirley Grubbs; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 16 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Ray, James, 77, Saginaw, Mich., died May 7. Spouse: Rhodan Ray. Parents: Alfred and Adell Harris Ray. Children: Clara Pinkston, Marlene Patterson, Jackie, Roberta Smmons, Debra Marks, Phil, Christopher, Charles, George; 22 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 13 at Grace Chapel, Saginaw.

Rohrer, Clarence D., 84, Lancaster, Pa., died May 31. Spouse: Alverta Huber Rohrer (deceased). Parents: Christian and Fannie Diffenbach Rohrer. Children: J. Kenneth, John, Ronald, Jean M. Deaner, Barbara Hoover; 12 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa.

Rohrer, Mary, 88, Lancaster, Pa., died May 9. Parents: Peter L. and Bertha Wenger Rohrer. Funeral: May 12 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa.

Roth, Leonard W., 77, Akron, N.Y., died May 28. Spouse: Ruth Schrock. Parents: William and Lena Roth. Children: Laurie Herr, Charlene Davis, Steven; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 31 at Alden (N.Y.) Mennonite Church.

Shank, Samuel Shetler, 89, Linville, Va., died May 31. Spouse: Kathryn Showalter Shank. Parents: Perry and Katherine Showalter Shank. Children: Richard Samuel, Randall Eugene, Emily Kay; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 at Trissels Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for a ***director of development***. This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. The successful candidate will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment and be available to begin employment between August 2006 and July 2007.

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In this role, the director will regularly audit the churchwide system for the inclusion of racial/ethnic leaders and resources and provide a network for conversation among racial/ethnic groups. The intercultural relations director will provide counsel to churchwide agencies and related groups about racial/ethnic people who are able to serve in board and staff roles. The intercultural relations director will work with other Executive Leadership staff to help the Executive Board lead Mennonite Church USA in becoming an antiracist church.

Resumés should be sent to Ron Byler, 500 S. Main St., P.O. Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515.

Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church welcomes qualified applications for ***transitional lead pastor position***—commencement scheduled Summer 2006, for approximately one year (see www.pmcweb.org). Submit letter of inquiry and ministerial leadership information to: PSMC Office, attn: Jeff Wright, Box CAL, 1539 East Howard St., Pasadena, CA 91104.

Local coordinator needed for **Seattle Mennonite Voluntary Service** (MVS) program. Recruit/orient volunteers, liaise with placement agencies and supporting Mennonite congregations, oversee unit house/budget, build/support relationships. Averages 18 h/p/w, fair wages. Opens July 1, 2006. Call 206-361-4630, email mvslpc@netsmc.net for more information.

Eastern Mennonite School is seeking a part-time ***U.S. history teacher*** for the 2006-07 school year.

Please express your interest to Paul G. Leaman, principal, if you share the call for Christ-centered education in an academic environment. Email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502. EMHS is an equal opportunity employer.

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Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind., seeks an interim part-time ***youth pastor***, beginning asap through July 2007 to minister to youth from congregational families and youth from unchurched community families. Contact Rachel Nafziger Hartzler at 574-533-1720, 574-370-8186 or rach@maplenet.net.

Bethany Christian Schools (gr. 6-12; enrollment 300) invites applications for the administrative position of ***business manager*** for the coming school year. Preference will be given to candidates with a bachelor's degree in accounting or business, or equivalent work experience. To apply, submit a resumé and letter of application to Allan Dueck, Principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. Contact 574-538-7873; akdueck@bethanycs.net.

RESOURCES

Philosophy and Theology by John D. Caputo (Abingdon, 2006, $12) argues that these two disciplines need each other, that they are "two kinds of faith."

Shouts and Whispers: Twenty-One Writers Speak About Their Writing and Their Faith, edited by Jennifer L. Holberg (Eerdmans, 2006, $15), contains an array of reflections on topics surrounding the often-perilous intersection of writing and faith.

The North End Lives: A Journey Through Poverty Terrain by Hugo Neufeld (Herald Press, 2006, $11.99) recounts stories of residents, most of whom lived below the poverty line, in a neighborhood in Hamilton, Ont., where Hugo and Doreen Neufeld ministered for nearly 18 years.

We Should Talk Peace: Stories of African Peacemakers (MCC, 2006, free loan) is a 27-minute DVD that tells stories of grass-roots peacemakers in Africa who are making a difference in their communities. Available from Mennonite Central Committee, 888-564-4676, mcc.org/catalog.

The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness: Preparing to Practice by Rabbi Rami Shapiro (SkyLight Paths, 2006, $16.99) invites us to cultivate lovingkindness in every aspect of our lives—toward ourselves, others, nature and animals.

Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-Surrender, Love of God and Love of Neighbor by David Augsburger (Brazos Press, 2006, $19.99) reveals that our spiritual lives will grow when we look outside ourselves and lay down our lives in service to God and neighbor.

The Redemption of Love: Rescuing Marriage and Sexuality from the Economics of a Fallen World by Carrie A. Miles (Brazos Press, 2006, $24.99) looks to Scripture for a clear understanding of the causes of today's problems, using a socio-economic analysis to attempt "a biblical theology of marriage."

Darkness Is My Only Companion: A Christian Response to Mental Illness by Kathryn Greene-McCreight (Brazos Press, 2006, $16.99) confronts the difficult questions raised by her own affliction, bipolar disorder. She asks: Does God send this suffering? Why, if I am a Christian, can I not rejoice? What is happening to my soul?

From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy by Matthew Dickerson and David O'Hara (Brazos Press, 2006, $19.99) explores the influence and importance of ancient biblical narrative, Greek mythology, Arthurian legend and other works of "Faërie" on our literary culture and assesses modern authors such as Philip Pullman, Walter Wangerin and J. K. Rowling.

Godspeech: Putting Divine Disclosures into Human Words by Ben Campbell Johnson (Eerdmans, 2006, $18) helps readers articulate the presence of God they discover from ordinary daily experiences.

Against the Draft: Essays on Conscientious Objection from the Radical Reformation to the Second World War by Peter Brock (University of Toronto Press, 2006, $80) includes 25 essays by the world's leading historian on pacifism.

Wake Up, Bertha Bear! by Chad Mason, illustrated by Chad Wallace (Down East Books, 2006, $15.95), is a children's book that should comfort any child who has felt left out by his or her peers. The animals discover that Stanley Skunk has a useful gift.

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Grieving divorce

Gerald Shenk teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

Friends of mine divorced last year, friends who aren't known in Mennonite circles. Brian (I'll call him) replied to Christmas greetings with an anguished note. His wife had left him a year earlier. I'd worked with both of them; she carried significant responsibilities in Christian ministry also. They were a team, covering a range of tasks together and separately. I had no reason to question their commitment or integrity.

"It's so hard," Brian wrote. "I've never been through a year so painful. She quit her job in January and moved out of our apartment in February. Within a short time, she claims she had met another guy and fallen in love.

"Our divorce was final in August. Up until then, she came back to our home to visit with our children. She married the new man in October. Our two teenaged children decided to stay with me.

"We were careful to do the divorce arrangements in a "Christian" and peaceable manner. We split the possessions, with a lawyer's help. Using the same lawyer, we didn't get so tangled.

"He said it was the most unconflicted process he had ever seen. We helped her move out and parted in a friendly manner.

"But the pain is still there. We cry. Sometimes we're angry. We long for her to return. But after she took up with another fellow, the contacts became few and far between. There's not as much to say anymore. She's not spending much time with the children anymore.

"She says she fell in love and wanted to completely change her world. She cut off communication even with her friends from childhood; changed her lifestyle.

"We had 25 good years of marriage," Brian wrote, "but then the last year was the worst I could imagine. Right up until the day of the divorce, I called her back, offering forgiveness and proposing a fresh start for us.

"After the divorce and when she remarried, I realized that it's irreversible. I had been falling into depression every time I saw her. Now it's been four months, and I'm starting to recover. But I really missed her over the holidays again."

After Brian's first note, I staggered in disbelief, trying to comprehend what troubling dark currents might have explained the breakdown. Friends had rallied round them, offering Christian care, compassion and some vigorous counsel. Brian and his wife attended some sessions of marriage counseling. But to little avail; her decision seemed final, he said.

One piece of the puzzle may explain a bit. There was some childhood trauma in her life, Brian sadly noted. When she was 11, her own mother left the family and moved to another country with a different husband. But all explanations fail.

I'm hearing only Brian's part, one side of the story. I know from directly accompanying others how divergent the partisan accounts can be. I'm bringing this case now simply because I want the chance to grieve out loud. This particular tragedy is remote, yet we all have felt anguish with cases closer to home. We are not immune in Mennonite communities to the heartbreak and sin of marital failures. At one point our daughter observed that half the seniors in her MYF were undergoing parental separation or divorce.

We must be more courageous in speaking with each other about our marriages.

We must be more courageous in speaking with each other about our marriages. We hesitate to intervene in the "private" concerns and intimate details of each other's lives. But we are swamped by a culture that teaches us self-absorption and moral indulgence. As consumers we too readily discard whatever we can't easily fix. In such a throwaway culture, we more than ever need to be honest and direct with each other.

As disciples of Jesus, we follow an unmarried prophet who taught that marriage is to be honored as a covenant and a merciful gift from God. We can't be content to treat marriage as a private good; its quality and integrity are part of our shared social fabric. The failures and strengths of individual marriages belong to us all.

Jesus also warned against causing offense to the little ones: it would be better to end up with millstones around our necks in the depths of the sea than cause the children to stumble, he said. How can we sit unperturbed nearby while "adult" self-interest trumps the care and nurture of vulnerable youngsters?

I commit myself to new levels of prayer, care and the courage to intervene in shoring up marriages close to me. Along with my faith community, I want to wrap the fabric of shalom around those in danger of forgetting the true and lasting gifts of covenant. TM

Mennonite Church USA

Pam Seretny, science and art teacher at Philadelphia Mennonite High School, with her science class.

Little things add up to big responsibility for Mennonite teachers.

"It's not just what you say, it's what you do," says Pam Seretny, who teaches art and science at Philadelphia Mennonite High School – and prays for wisdom and discernment. In this urban and ethnic environment, Seretny and her fellow teachers play a huge role in character development, modeling Mennonite values and exposing students to uncommon views on conflict resolution and environmental stewardship.

Many students go on to Mennonite colleges, returning to tell their former teachers it was the "little things" they did that made the biggest impact. As a cancer patient who has always been open with her students, Seretny has seen the fruits of this impact firsthand. "They've shown me depth, compassion, love and community I never imagined." A powerful experience for Seretny – and a powerful testimony to Mennonite educational institutions investing in the next generation.

Joyfully following Jesus *We* are Mennonite Church USA

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Everett J. Thomas

Christian revolutionaries?

Some Christians in the United States are determined to paint a spiritual aura around the heroes of the American Revolution and then use it as the basis for claiming Christian foundations for our nation. I found little to support such revisionism in my reading of the past year.

One way to unpack such history this Fourth of July is to imagine where our ancestors were 230 years ago. Even if they paid attention to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, they probably did not hear about it until days and weeks—maybe months—afterward. When they did, I doubt that our ancestors viewed the revolutionaries as especially important Christian leaders of their day.

I got interested in the events of the 1770s and 1780s several years ago after reading John Ruth's tome, *The Earth Is The Lord's*—the 1132-page history of Mennonite groups in southeastern Pennsylvania that later became Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

One of my ancestors, Johannes Thomas, was part of that group and lived through the American Revolution. To learn more about the political leaders of Johannes' world, I read Ron Chernow's *Alexander Hamilton* and three books by David McCullough: *American Sphinx* to learn about Thomas Jefferson, *1776* to learn about George Washington's leadership, and the pugnacious second president in *John Adams*. The lives of these men provide a reality check about the politics, rhetoric and behavior of those who led the American Revolution. These men were no saints; some even appear atheistic—in private.

Those who claim the United States is a Christian country cannot base that claim on the behavior of its first leaders.

Several revolutionaries (Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin) wanted the American colony to accept France as their ally. Others abhorred that idea since, as Englishmen, France was their mortal enemy. My Thomas ancestors were of Swiss or Germanic descent, probably did not speak English in their homes and may have carried Old World (European) biases about England and France.

Here's what I imagine Johannes felt about the politicians of his day if he read the newspapers—often little more than fronts for political parties: He, and other Mennonites, were grateful for rich farmland in the commonwealth created by William Penn. The connection to England through this Quaker leader would have made them loyal to the King and to England. Indeed, some Mennonites left Pennsylvania and moved to Ontario during the Revolutionary War years because of this loyalty.

But would those Mennonites have viewed firebrands like Alexander Hamilton and ruthless power brokers like John Adams as Christian paragons? After reading about their shinnanigans, I just cannot imagine it. Neither can I imagine Johannes holding Thomas Jefferson up as a model; Jefferson lived luxuriously in France during most of the Revolutionary War years while his slaves worked the family's vast landholdings in Virginia.

As Mennonites today, we trace our roots to ancestors other than those in Pennsylvania in 1776. Some of us can trace our roots to those sick and dying on the slave ships in the Middle Passage. Other ancestors were going about their business as part of Native American tribes—with varying degrees of alarm as white settlers spread across the land. Some ancestors were in Europe and Russia in 1776, focusing on their concerns rather than on one of England's colonies. Others were living out their stories in the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America—or in any number of other countries around the world.

I doubt that many Mennonites who trace their roots to their ancestors feel a need to imbue the American revolutionaries with a special Christian patina. The people who led the war for independence were no more virtuous and no stronger in their Christian convictions than our national political leaders today.

Those who claim the United States is a Christian country cannot make that claim on the basis of its first leaders and their behavior.—*ejt*

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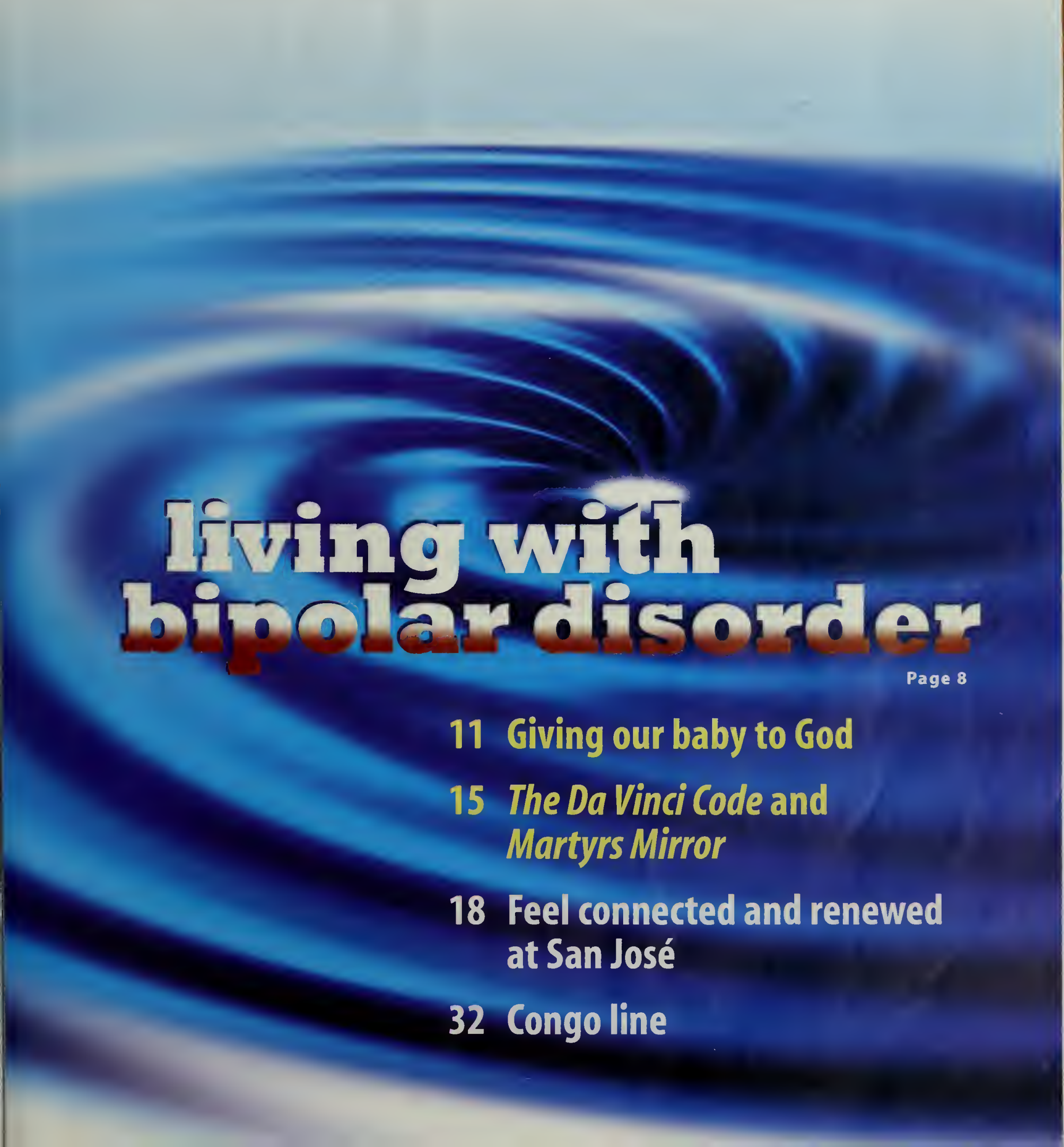

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Anger: the devil's furnace

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Is anger the devil's furnace as the Parson names it in *The Canterbury Tales*? The first family story in the Bible is about out-of-control anger that leads to the unthinkable—one brother kills another. Cain kills Abel. The biblical portrayal of sin and evil begins with anger in the family and its consequence, what we today call domestic violence. Anger is one of the seven deadly sins.

Anger is the devil's delight, because we can feel so right about doing the wrong things. Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV) says, "In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."

We live in such an angry global and national environment that we have developed a high tolerance for anger. Suicide bombings, targeted assassinations, the war on terror, the abuse of prisoners of war, videotaped beheadings and the genocidal displacement of whole tribal and ethnic groups demonstrate devilish, globalized anger.

Hundreds of women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends each year. Anger manifests itself in bitter divorce proceedings and the endless litigation for pain and suffering.

Anger is serious, spiritual dynamite, and we need to deal with it in all its forms. Ephesians 4:31 (NIV) says, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." Bitterness is Crock-Pot anger. We just turn up the heat, let it stew, and do a slow burn.

Rage, on the other hand, is powder-keg anger unleashed in flashes of violent actions and bellowing voices. Get rid of it. As a father of four energetic children, there were times I needed to defuse my anger. "I am so angry right now I need a time out. I want to talk with you in 30 minutes."

How do we overcome unholy anger?

Accept and own your anger. Anger is like a red light on the dash. It says, "Something is wrong here and needs attention." Accept and own the anger. "You don't make me angry. I choose to be angry" is a liberating statement.

Understand your anger. Not all anger is bad. A righteous anger gives us energy to persevere against evil and the courage to stand up for people who are oppressed. God is angry about evil, and God's people ought to be angry about evil. When Jesus was arrested and abused, he rebuked the high priest: "If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me" (John 18:23, NIV)?

Slow up your anger response. James 1:19-20 says, "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because our anger does not produce the righteousness God desires." Write the email, but don't send it. Sleep on it. Pray about it. Talk to your spouse or a trusted friend. "A fool gives full vent to anger, but the wise quietly hold it back" (Proverbs 29:11, NIV).

Trust God's justice. We cannot make everything right in this world. We may not make things right in our lifetime. Slavery was resisted for hundreds of years before it was substantially abolished by social consent and by law. Your parents may have done mean things to you. Your children or siblings may have mistreated you. Your employer may have exploited you. Romans 12:19 (NIV) says, "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord." Trust God's justice.

Overcome feelings of anger with loving action. When we act out anger, we become angrier. When we act out love, we become more loving. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:27-28, NIV).

Flood the devil's furnace with water.

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 14, July 18, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Voices from the margins

This summer's Racial/Ethnic People Conference Aug. 3-6 in Dallas represents every associate group in Mennonite Church USA. Everyone will enjoy God's blessing on corporate worship and support each group's work. The conference will be more than ceremony; we will affirm the principle of community and embrace its constructive power. A chorus of rising voices from the margins of Mennonite society will harmonize for the cause of shalom, God's peace, to be shared among all. This conference will help the church appreciate and understand the powerful roles diversity and culture play in our lives and expression of faith. Our diversity as people of color and our dedication as people of commitment will be seen helping Mennonite Church USA, its agencies and institutions become a better church for all its members. We will join in the spirit of Ephesians 4:15-16, united in purpose to strengthen one another "unto him who is the head—Christ."

Without the united presence of groups and congregations representing growing constituencies within Mennonite Church USA, how can the dominant culture ever truly understand that racism is socially wrong and morally sinful? Racism perpetuates a false sense of innate superiority in some, while others insist that token examples of advancement prove their intent to work equally and willingly for all. Racial/ethnic people are determined and ready for the same levels of responsibilities others have in Mennonite Church USA. We insist on having the same full benefits of membership and its privileges enjoyed by others. Racism is not just church history past but is church biography lived and written in present tense. This conference will help write a new and refreshing chapter in the life of Mennonite Church USA.—*Kenneth Thompson, Bronx, N.Y.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Three courageous Mennonites share intimately about personal health issues. Leah Kabrina describes her journey and healing process as The Bipolar Person (page 8). Jake Hallman recounts his anger at God upon learning that the son in his wife's womb had spina bifida—and the rare surgery that left them with "a perfect son" (page 11). John A. Liechty describes his journey to relearn language after a brain aneurysm left him with aphasia (page 13). Unrelated to physical disabilities is a fourth article: Gerald Biesecker-Mast's juxtaposition of the *Martyr's Mirror* and the currently popular book and movie *The Da Vinci Code* (page 15). The news section carries Gordon Houser's report of the latest meeting of Bridgefolk, an annual Catholic-Mennonite conversation (page 19).—*Editor*

Where are the women?

I appreciate Marty Lehman's willingness to address the disproportionate amount of male leadership in Mennonite Church USA ("Where Are the Women?" Leadership, June 20). She exposed the elephant in the room; how did it get there? What are the systemic reasons Lehman often finds herself "the only woman in a meeting"? What conditions created this imbalance?

Unfortunately, the lack of women in leadership is not a phenomenon that appeared out of nowhere. We've made it so. Mennonites have not risen above the male-centric society of biblical times as much as one would hope. Two major threads in our historic and current fabric contribute to this troubling imbalance. For one, the Bible says that women should be quiet in church and submit to their husbands. As a result, many Mennonite churches haven't been open to women pastors, though thankfully that's changing. There are Mennonites who believe that the man is the head of the household, creating an accepted hierarchy between the genders. The consequences of these views are evident in our leadership disparity, even as minds and hearts shift.

Second, the language we use for God is powerful and formative. During worship we use male images for God and in doing so effectively train the corporate subconsciousness: men reflect the divine more accurately than women, men are more capable, men have a closer "in" with God. Simultaneously, women are subtly and repeatedly taught that they are "less than" or not the norm. If we see God as a male-only deity, then naturally men are elevated.

The Mennonite church harvests male leaders because we grow male leaders. With our quiet sowing of unacknowledged partiality, it's no surprise where the women are and why. Are we willing to take an honest look at this problem, or are we satisfied with the inequity we are perpetuating? I pray we can continue this dialogue as we grow as a community of healing and hope where everyone is valued equally regardless of sex, race, age or socioeconomic status. That is the kind of church where I would love to be a leader.—*Jill Hostetler Kaufman, Goshen, Ind.*

When the June 20 issue of *The Mennonite* arrived, per habit I turned first to Readers Say. I always notice the number of letters written by men and by women. As is usually the case, women's voices were painfully underrepresented. In fact, once again there were no letters from women and again I wondered, "Where are women's voices? What are my Mennonite sisters thinking?" I didn't know whether to chuckle or cry when in the same issue I found Marty Lehman's article asking "Where are the women?" in leadership roles in Mennonite Church USA (Leadership, page 18).

I realize you can only print letters received. Is there a way to make it clear that you welcome and encourage a better balance of responses and opinions? *The Mennonite* could consider a policy of publishing equal numbers of responses from women and men in Readers Say. If no women's responses are available, nothing would appear in this column for that issue.

If our sisters' voices were more audible, perhaps women would gain confidence that they have something important to contribute and would come to mind more often when positions of leadership are being considered. Then Marty Lehman's question would thus be answered.—*Carolyn H. Heggen, Corvallis, Ore.*

Editor's note: Our informal policy gives priority to letters from (as we can identify them) women, youth, young adult and underrepresented racial/ethnic members of Mennonite Church USA.

God cannot be happy

As a prison chaplain for 13 years, I have learned a great deal while in the Nebraska state prisons correctional system. First, the time served by an inmate is also being served by his or her family. Second, some inmates' families are not accepted as members by some churches. This really hurts me and the kingdom of God.

It appears that too many churches have clubs, committees, boards and programs but are producing nothing. If half the energy spent in talking about the programs of the churches could be channeled into spreading the gospel, thousands of souls could be won for Christ. Pious talk and resolution cannot take the place of proclaiming the precious message of the grace of God. After all is said and done, there is more said than done. There are far too many hurting people who for one reason or another are not being accepted and ministered to. God cannot be happy with those who pick and choose who gets saved or remains lost. Those outside looking at the church need the welcome mat offered to come on in and fellowship. They only desire to be involved and encouraged.—*Bill Hartwell, Omaha, Neb.*

Wants pen pals

What's wrong with setting up a pen pal column? There was always one in the Mennonite publication for preteens, *On the Line*. When I was a kid, my friends and I would love to pour over the letters and try to find someone as close to our own birthdays as possible. It could be set up similarly.—*Connie Mader, Kitchener, Ont.*

Doctrine and unity

"Do We Have to Choose Between Doctrine and Unity?" by Karl Landis (June 6) offers a hopeful way of prioritizing Christian doctrines to prevent divisions over less-than-critical issues. However, I note that Landis' two categories, "brick wall" and "picket fence," conceive of doctrines as means of separating people. Could it be that such metaphors themselves are already part of our problems with unity? Could we perhaps start with different metaphors, such as the biblical ones of milk and solid food?

If we think of doctrine as nourishment and refreshment rather than walls and fences, we might be able to see our doctrinal differences as being like the differences among burger eaters, sushi eaters and vegetarians. We don't want to swallow or see our sisters and brothers swallow something poisonous, and we ought to talk about that. But we also know that some things are more a matter of taste than of health, and we can sit at the same table even if we have to say, "No thanks" to some of the things we're offered.—*David Rensberger, Decatur, Ga.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

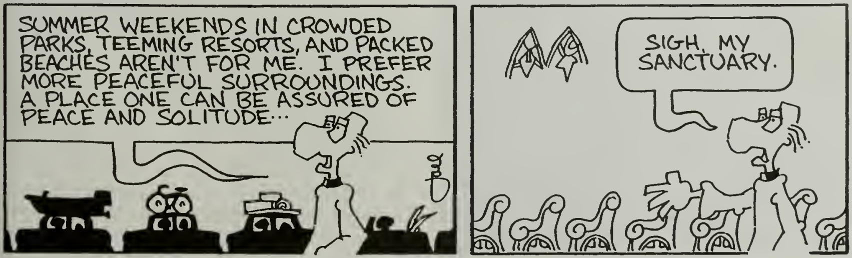
I watch World Cup soccer (58 responses):

- ○ Often (26%)
- ○ Occasionally (33%)
- ○ Never (40%)
- ○ What is World Cup soccer? (2%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


SUMMER WEEKENDS IN CROWDED PARKS, TEEMING RESORTS, AND PACKED BEACHES AREN'T FOR ME. I PREFER MORE PEACEFUL SURROUNDINGS. A PLACE ONE CAN BE ASSURED OF PEACE AND SOLITUDE...
SIGH. MY SANCTUARY.

IN BRIEF

Wiedenhoefer named MCC West Coast director

Sheri Wiedenhoefer has been named director of West Coast Mennonite Central Committee, one of the four regional MCC offices in the United States. Wiedenhoefer, who holds a master's degree in peace and conflict studies from Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University, is completing 14 years as executive director of Community Youth Ministries, a community-based organization offering neighborhood and after-school programs, family life education and a teen moms programs in the Reedley, Calif., area. From March 2000 to February 2006, she also served as peace and justice educator for West Coast MCC. She begins as director Sept. 1, replacing Bob and Barb Buxman.—*MCC*

CrossRoads opens welcome center

CrossRoads, the Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center in Harrisonburg, Va., opened its newly renovated Welcome Center to the public June 18. Norwood Shank thanked the Daniel Myers family for donating the Burkholder-Myers House and paying to have it moved up the hill. Steve Carpenter represented Virginia Conference of Mennonite Church USA and James Miller the Shenandoah District of the Church of the Brethren. —*CrossRoads*

Columbus, Ohio, is 2009 convention site

DENVER—The 2009 Biennial Assembly for Mennonite Church USA will be held in Columbus, Ohio, June 29-July 4. Columbus was selected from a field of four cities investigated by Jorge Vallejos, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA. The other three cities were Chicago, Cincinnati and Indianapolis.

"Based on ... the average cost to attend assembly in 2009," Vallejos said in his recommendation to the Executive Board on July 1, "we believe Columbus offers the best meeting package for our event. Columbus is the least expensive for our delegates and also the least expensive for our office."

The total cost per person is projected at $668 (registration, meals, lodging and parking). The convention office considered only cities in the Midwest so that the majority of participants could drive to the site after needing to fly to San Jose 2007. Mennonite World Conference's assembly is also scheduled for 2009. It will meet in Paraguay July 13-19.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Missional change requires passion, prayer

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.—Nearly 40 congregational, conference and denominational leaders examined how to empower conferences and congregations to be agents of missional change May 19-21 in Colorado Springs.

Anita Amstutz, pastor of Albuquerque (N.M.) Mennonite Church, and fellow presenter Don Rheinheimer, co-pastor of Mountain Community Mennonite Church in Palmer Lake, Colo., with Jan, his wife, encouraged leaders to regain their prophetic voices by nurturing their own spirituality, worshiping God, allowing passion to drive their ministry and making prayer the center of church life.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Melissa Engle

Sharing the love of music

Vincent Berry, a Mennonite Central Committee Summer Service worker in Detroit, shares his love for music. He is one of 83 Summer Service workers for 2006. Young people of diverse ethnic backgrounds serve in their home communities for 10 weeks through MCC's Summer Service program.—*MCC*

EMS adds church mentoring course

Mauricio Chenlo

HARRISONBURG, Va.—"American culture cries out for healthy, genuine relationships," says Mauricio Chenlo, who is heading up the newest online course in the Eastern Mennonite Seminary curriculum.

The distance learning course, Mentoring Youth into Life, will focus on ways to strengthen adult-youth relationships.

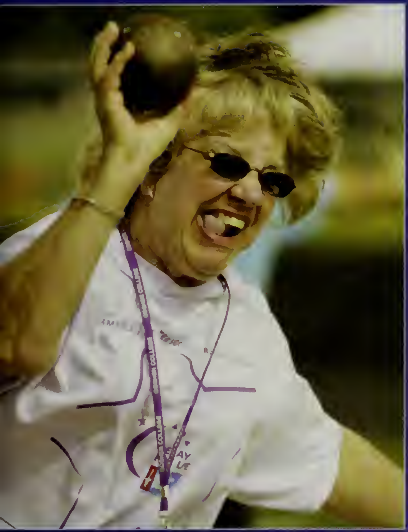
Chenlo is director of Mennonite Mission Network's Hispanic Mission Training Academy and associate pastor for youth at Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church in partnership with Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and the Eastern Carolina District. He has worked with church planting and multicultural urban ministries across eastern North Carolina, including Building Together Ministries, a racial reconciliation program and community peace clinic.—*Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

MPN focuses on congregations

SCOTTDALE, Pa.—Reports of new marketing initiatives and progress on stabilizing finances highlighted the May 5-6 annual meeting here of the Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) Board.

"We have shifted from a survival mode to engaging the future," said board chair Phil Bontrager. In the past year, MPN focused on relationships with congregations in Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. Marketing initiatives included researching curriculum use in congregations, appointing a resource advocate coordinator, holding a "train the trainers" event for the Gather 'Round curriculum, making follow-up phone calls to all congregations and improving online access to MPN materials.

According to audited financial statements, publishing revenue for the fiscal year ending on Jan. 31 included $185,000 in donations that helped to offset $250,000 in curriculum development costs. Over the past four years, MPN's long-term debt has been reduced from $5.1 million to $3 million. MPN ended fiscal year end 2006 with an operating



Jeff Arbogast, *The Goshen News*

iors give their best shot

ella Hernley, Luray, Va., participates in the shot put at the biennial Mennonite Senior Sports Classic, which attracted articipants to Goshen (Ind.) College June 15-17 for fun fellowship—and low-key competition—in 31 different etic events, most related to track and field. The event was nsored by the Mennonite Association of Retired Persons er the leadership of Helen Lapp, executive director. *uart W. Showalter*

loss of $27,683 and net loss of $26,394 in other activities. MPN's net worth stood at $378,748.

The board unanimously approved Ron Rempel as executive director for an additional three-year term. A recently completed review of his leadership included consultation with the Joint Executive Committee of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada and with MPN management staff.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Missionary pioneer in Asia dies at 83

NEWTON, Kan.—Verney Unruh, 83, who died July 8, devoted 38 years to international ministry in Japan and Taiwan and administrated Asian ministries for a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network. He then served in pastoral roles, both paid and unpaid, for another 17 years.

Unruh was born May 8, 1923, to Anthony and Anna Albrecht Unruh, who attended Bethlehem Mennonite Church of rural Bloomfield, Mont., where Unruh was baptized in 1937.

At Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., from which he graduated in 1945, he met Belva Waltner, Freeman, S.D., and they were married July 7, 1946.

He graduated from New York Biblical Seminary in 1948 and accepted his first pastoral assignment in Pulaski, Iowa, before going to Japan in 1951.

Verney Unruh

He became the first staff secretary for Asia for the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1966. In 1978, after a year at Princeton Theological Seminary, the Unruhs went to Taiwan with the Commission on Overseas Mission.

He served in various pastoral roles at First Mennonite Church, Newton, from 1989 to 1998 and continued as a volunteer until his death.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Congolese Mennonites solicit prayer

KINSHASA, Democratic Republic of Congo—Congolese hope the national elections scheduled for July 30 will open a new era in their country's history. Mennonites in Congo are calling upon their sisters and brothers throughout the world to join them in prayer during this time. There are more than 200,000 Mennonites in three conferences there.

Having suffered from many years of misery, the Congolese now hope to freely choose political leaders capable of responding to the aspirations of the people. From past experience, they know that election periods are often characterized by threats and dangers of many kinds.—*Jean-Paul Mudiji*

Second grader helps raise money for Congo

SOUTH BEND, Ind.—This spring Eric Streeter, a second grader at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, set a goal of raising $100 to help with one surgery in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He had heard physician John Martens, who grew up in the Congo and returns regularly to provide medical assistance there, talk about medical needs in that country. Eric started with his own savings. Soon other second graders decided to help. They raised more than six times the amount of Eric's objective by staffing a table of baked goods, which generated $625 for the Congo. As part of a developing relationship between Mennonite Church USA and Congolese Mennonites, Kern Road hosted Adolphe Komuesa of the Communauté Mennonite au Congo, a Mennonite World Conference member church.—*Andre Gingerich Stoner*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

Peace Tax Fund Campaign names new director

Alan Gamble, a local organizer in Michigan, has been named executive director of the Peace Tax Fund Campaign in Washington. The Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill now has 43 cosponsors, two fewer than the most cosponsors it has had since 1990. —*Chris Fretz*

Say no to torture

Twenty-seven U.S. religious figures, including some evangelical Christians, have endorsed a strong statement June 6 against the use of torture by the American military and security forces, saying "the soul of our nation" is at stake. Evangelical signers included author-pastor Rick Warren, president Ted Haggard of the National Association of Evangelicals, Fuller Seminary president Richard Mouw and Roberta Hestenes, minister-at-large with World Vision. Other signers included former president Jimmy Carter, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington, Greek Orthodox archbishop Demetrios of New York, emergent-church leader Brian McLaren, Islamic Society of North America national director Sayyid M. Syeed and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel. —*The Christian Century*

The man born blin
the person wit

Jesus has a mission for us all in his kingdo

by Leah Kabira

The story of the man born blind (John 9:1-41) is a good counterpoint for my own disability story. The man born blind had been defined by the outside world solely by his blindness, and people no longer recognize him once he's healed. However, he does not think of himself merely as a blind man. He goes out and proclaims the Good News of Jesus' healing power. He even gets bolder about his proclamations as the story unfolds. This shows that Jesus has a place for us all and a mission for us all in his kingdom, regardless of our individual capacities.

I have bipolar disorder, what used to be called manic depression. For me, depression is white, empty and colorless. It is too bright. I want it to go away. Mania's color is red. It is intense: the color of blood and rage. When I am manic I am red, too, adding to the world's intensity and amplifying it.

Mania's color is red. It is intense: the color of blood and rage. When I am manic I am red, too, adding to the world's intensity and amplifying it.

and bipolar disorder

gardless of our individual capacities.

I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder two years ago, though I realize now that I have had it since adolescence. It is caused by a chemical imbalance, and it affects a person's thoughts and moods.

My first memory of a depressive episode is from when I was 12, and my first memory of mania was from the age of 18. Of course this is all hindsight. At the time I thought other people went through bleak times, euphoric times, irritable times or sped-up times. Perhaps I was a little odd, or perhaps, like me, people just didn't talk about such things.

These episodes affected my life, but even then I didn't associate them with any sort of disability. I have been suicidal more than once. I went through periods during which I came up with all sorts of grand plans, only to drop them suddenly because of extreme discouragement and a subsequent fall into depression. My husband put up with a lot. In my mid-20s I finally sought help for depression and took an antidepressant for a brief period. I immediately went into mania, though the nurse assured me this was normal. In reality it was a strong sign that I was bipolar. It was another missed clue.

What made me go to the psychiatrist were a couple of manic episodes during which my thoughts went so fast that I couldn't understand them—I was mentally paralyzed, realizing deep down that something was terribly wrong but unable to do anything to stop the cascade of disjointed thoughts.

That brings me to October 2004. I was both fearful and grateful when I finally got the diagnosis. Fearful because I didn't know if I would ever be able to live a "normal" life; grateful because I finally had a clear lens with which to interpret my past. It seems funny now that I feared for my future, given that my past was riddled with episodes that just happened not to have been named at the time.

I became The Bipolar Person. My clear lens for the past became my only lens, the only way I could interpret my past and present life, the only way I could project my future. I no longer recognized myself.

I defined myself solely by my newly named disability. This is a departure from the man born blind, since he seemed not to base his self-worth or identity on his disability. I admire the speed at which he threw off his old label as the blind man who begs to take on his new role as a disciple of Jesus.

When first dealing with my label I tried to read biographies of people coping with bipolar disorder so I could learn how to live. It was distressing to read of their manic and depressive episodes, their struggles with suicide attempts, their self-induced bankruptcies, their grandiose ideas gone awry, their infidelities, their encounters with police and their many hospitalizations.

I became The Bipolar Person. My clear lens for the past became my only lens, the only way I could interpret my past and present life, the only way I could project my future.

My history hadn't been that bad. Would my life go terribly wrong now that I had the diagnosis? Then I read the hopeful parts of the biographies, the stories of medications that worked to stabilize lives, the creativity restored, the relationships and bank accounts slowly mended. Maybe this bipolar thing was doable after all.

But I was still the bipolar person and became even more so during and after my hospitalization in December 2004. There I was surrounded by other people with bipolar disorder. They had had many hospitalizations, even though there had been good months and good years of stability. Being in the hospital felt like a moral failure for me. I remained the bipolar person.

In meeting others who have mental illnesses I have learned I am fortunate. Within a few months of my diagnosis my doctor figured out a medication regimen that works for me. For many, if not

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most people, this sort of stabilization process can take many months or years—if equilibrium is reached at all.

I have a great support system. My husband has been with me all of these up-and-down years. The neighborhood moms have been ready at almost a moment's notice to take my kids and coordinate their care when I have been unable to do so. I have a support group I attend where people understand what it is to live with this illness and where no one is bothered by someone talking too fast or crying. I have my husband and friends to talk with and friends who pray with me and for me. When I do have another episode I will be well cared for.

People at church prayed for me when I couldn't or wouldn't pray myself. Prayer for cure wouldn't help, but prayer for healing has.

I read and read. Here are a few titles: *An Unquiet Mind, The Bipolar Disorder Survival Guide* and a real tome: *Manic Depressive Insanity and Paranoia*. How is that for light reading? I tried to deal with this redefinition of who I was by thinking my way through it.

I had a hard time praying and going to church. It was difficult dealing with God. I had only prayers of lament and sorrow and soon gave those up, too. It was hard to tell people how I was doing, though I know people at church were sincere in asking, "How are you doing this week?" Some specifically reached out to me, and I didn't know how to respond. People prayed for me. Prayer is supposed to cure, right? But I was a broken person, a person who couldn't be fixed. Yet I wasn't shunned for my label, and there again I am among the fortunate ones.

The man born blind didn't ask to be cured. It was Jesus' idea to cure the man and then to give him a new vocation. This task demanded much from the man. Facing the Pharisees must have been a formidable undertaking. I admire the man for his increasingly strong witness and courage. He must have known his bold witness would come at the price of expulsion from the synagogue, but he did it anyway.

I'm not sure how my perception of myself as a broken bipolar person changed. The change happened gradually, partly through therapy. Prayer helped, too, and by this I mean others' prayer. People at church prayed for me when I couldn't or wouldn't pray myself. Prayer for cure wouldn't help, but prayer for healing has. This healing has been an ongoing process in which God met me where I was and has been calling me back to the world. I slowly remembered myself as a person who happened to have bipolar disorder and not just as a bipolar person.

Since then my medication has stabilized my moods, and I have felt more able to act in the world. Moreover, I've felt myself called to use my renewed energy, time and talents to help others. I've done more volunteering at a hospital; I give my time to my son's Cub Scout den and to the school PTA to help the community's children.

I hope this well period will continue for a long time, but even if it doesn't, God will have a place for me. God can use even me to do God's work in the world.

Leah Kabira, Naperville, Ill., is a member of Lombard Mennonite Church. This article is adapted from a talk she presented there.

A Christian response to mental illness

Darkness Is My Only Companion: A Christian Response to Mental Illness by Kathryn Greene-McCreight (Brazos Press, 2006, $16.99) confronts the difficult questions raised by the author's experience of bipolar disorder. She asks: Does God send this suffering? Why, if I am a Christian, can I not rejoice? What is happening to my soul? She divides the book into three parts. In the first, "Facing Mental Illness," she relates her experience of the highs and lows of bipolar disorder, including her hospitalization and receiving electroconvulsive therapy. In the second part, "Faith and Mental Illness," she questions the value of the personality and feeling in religious reflection, explores the relationship of the brain, mind and soul, and discusses the value of prayer for the health of the mentally ill. Her final part, "Living with Mental Illness," focuses on practical issues and how to be a friend to the mentally ill. Greene-McCreight uses quotations from Scripture, poetry and hymns throughout the book, reminding readers of how honest the Bible is about suffering. Her insights into the experience and meaning of mental illness are illuminating. For example, she writes, "The mentally ill are one of the groups of handicapped people against whom it still seems to be socially acceptable to hold prejudice." In two appendices, she includes why and how she uses Scripture, and she lists symptoms of depression, mania and schizophrenia, plus resources for seeking therapy. This is a helpful book for those with mental illness and those wanting to help.—*Gordon Houser*

A father's journey of faith

Giving our baby to God

by Jake Hallman

Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come. 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.—"Amazing Grace"

I kept the hymnal open long after the song was over and kept repeating the verse above in my head. I had no idea what the next five months were going to bring, but I quickly identified the third verse of "Amazing Grace" as my battle cry. Four months with Tara, my wife, in a hospital over an hour away; four months playing Mr. Mom with a 4-year-old while working full-time; four months waiting and hoping our second son was going to be all right.

The phone call every parent dreads came mid-December 2002 during dinner. "It's about the baby," Tara's obstetrician said. "There's probably nothing to worry about, but we'd like you to come in for another ultrasound."

Despite the doctor's reassurance, we both seemed to know this pregnancy wasn't going to be without complications.

Two ultrasounds later, a trip to the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the results confirmed what Tara and I had been dreading for a month: our second baby had spina bifida. The most common birth defect, spina bifida affects one in every 2,000 births and is caused when the spinal column does not fuse around the 28th day after conception, before most women even know they're pregnant.

Preliminary tests showed the defect on our son's spine was low enough that he wouldn't be confined to a wheelchair. But I wasn't happy with that at the time.

As a member of a Mennonite church who attends every week, has taught Sunday school and helped out with the junior and senior high youth, I felt cheated. All that time in the pews and working for God—this wasn't supposed to happen to us. After being blessed with our first perfectly healthy son, Zeke, we figured the second time around would go as smoothly as the first.

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With God's help: Brett in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia soon after his birth. He needed to stay at CHOP for the first month of his life to increase weight and be weaned from oxygen.

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But it didn't.

For the next month I questioned, screamed, cursed and held God accountable for our son's spina bifida. As an omnipotent and omniscient being, God knew exactly what he was doing, and I wasn't happy with it. That month was a spiritual nadir; I went to church, just didn't pay attention or put my heart into anything but the ending.

I threw myself at the mercy of God, saying I'd had enough and it was time for him to take over.

After trying to deal with the news all on my own, I finally decided I needed some help. So, with God and me not on speaking terms, I turned to the next logical person, my wife. Tara said she coped with the news by giving the problem to God. She said this all had to fit into God's plan and that if there's anyone we should trust our child's life with, it should be God.

Without any better ideas, I decided to give it a shot. One night, while lying in bed, I prayed a simple prayer asking God to shoulder the burden I'd been trying to bear on my own. I threw myself at the mercy of God, saying I'd had enough and it was time for him to take over.

And it worked.

There wasn't an earth-shattering reversal of the test results, and I didn't all of a sudden have a new outlook on life; but after the prayer, things went a little easier. We soon found out there was an experimental procedure in which doctors could operate in utero to close our son's back and prevent amniotic fluid from further damaging the exposed nerves of the spinal cord. The surgery also lowered the chance of needing a shunt, as children with spina bifida commonly develop water on the brain (hydrocephalus).

A perfect son: Brett at home in Pennsburg, Pa., last summer

Photo supplied by Jake Hallman

Performed at only three places in the world, fetal surgery was still in the experimental stages when we signed up to make our son the 55th child at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to be a spina bifida fetal surgery baby. Though a generally conservative couple from a particularly conservative Mennonite congregation in eastern Pennsylvania, we felt led to go through with the surgery.

And though the surgery was good news, it was no quick fix. Complications included preterm labor, which could mean death for our son; a significant loss of blood in the high-risk surgery that could kill my wife, or combinations of the two.

But with the help of God, all went as planned. And on Jan. 23, 2003, neurosurgeons, obstetricians and a swarm of nurses helped open Tara's uterus, position our anesthetized baby and close the two-inch gap on his back with a patch of synthetic skin. At 23 weeks, the time of the surgery, our baby, whom we named Brett, was less than 12 inches long and weighed less than a pound.

Bad news came a few days later, when Tara's membranes ruptured, making the possibility of preterm labor a reality any day.

Tara, who managed to keep the same levelheaded approach of leaving God in control, dealt with strict bed rest for 11 weeks. I, meanwhile, found out what it's like to be a single parent as I shuttled Zeke to relatives, worked half-days at the weekly newspaper where I work and took Zeke to the hospital on weekends to see his mom confined to a hospital bed.

Brett and Tara managed to hold out until 32 weeks; 11 weeks longer than the doctors expected. Our second child was born April 2, 2003, at 16 inches, 5.1 pounds.

As difficult as the months were, we as a family felt closer to each other and God. The most powerful example came when the three of us (Brett was still in the hospital) spent the first night in the same room at the Ronald McDonald House in Philadelphia. All three of us fell asleep crying as we realized what we had missed out on when Tara was in the hospital—being together as a family. Once again I asked God to lift the burden from our family.

He responded a few hours later in a dream.

In the dream, I was sitting in a field looking up at the clouds. Suddenly the clouds formed into the unmistakable face of Jesus. The lips on the face slowly moved, and I heard a voice in my head saying, "Peace be with you, peace be with you."

Friends, family and members from our church didn't understand how we had gotten through the turbulent four months. Looking back, I'm not sure either. All I do know is that God knew what he was doing when he blessed us with another perfect son in his likeness.

Update: Brett is a normal 3-year-old doing everything normal 3-year-olds do: walking, running, talking and annoying his older brother Zeke. The only sign from his ordeal is the scar on his back and problems with bowel and bladder control.

Jake Hallman is a member of West Swamp Mennonite Church, Milford Square, Pa.

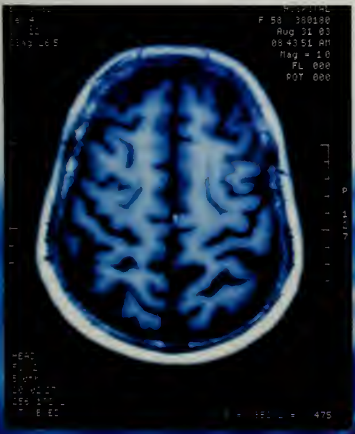
Living with aphasia

On the tip of my tongue

by John A. Liechty

I have aphasia. Twenty-eight years ago, a week after I had earned my master's degree in social work, I suffered a ruptured brain aneurysm. After my operation, I could not speak or communicate. There are two types of aphasia: expressive and receptive. Receptive aphasia affects the receiving of language. This can make people with aphasia feel as though everyone else is speaking a foreign language, and everything they read is gibberish. In fact, recovery is more difficult because the person with aphasia often must relearn the meaning of symbols before beginning to relearn language.

Expressive aphasia affects the production of language. A mild version of this is when someone experiences the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon. You know what you want to say, can describe it, maybe even draw it, but cannot think of the word or phrase. For people with aphasia, many or all words are on the tip of the tongue. Because their cognitive skills are more advanced than their language skills, aphasics often are frustrated by having much to say and no way to communicate.



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It is hard for someone who has never experienced aphasia to understand what aphasics live with. When I began speech therapy after my stroke, the therapist started with just 10 words—"house," "hammer," "fork," etc. It took a long time and much energy to hear and say those words properly. When the occupational therapist handed me a bar of soap, I put it into my mouth—without words, I didn't know what to do with it.

Gradually, speech came back. But even today, 29 years later, speaking is difficult. Sometimes the right word won't come, or I get my tenses wrong. I have greater difficulty with receptive aphasia—understanding what other people say. People who speak rapidly leave me totally lost. Complicated conversations leave me clueless. Recently I had lunch with my sister and her husband, who were hosting friends. They were talking about their travels around the United States, and I couldn't follow what they were saying because I couldn't keep track of the states—it was all jumbled. Once in a while, I try to read *USA Today.* I can read and comprehend the state-by-state summary paragraphs, but a front-page article is a struggle. For email I use a text-to-speech converter, and this helps with my comprehension. I also use voice recognition software to dictate my email replies and other documents. These tools have helped open my world.

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I found that listening to the choir allowed me to reconnect spiritually.

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A musical breakthrough: After my aneurysm surgery, the impact of the language barrier was so severe I became isolated and lonely. Then a speech pathologist suggested trying music therapy. She said, "Try to sing, 'I'm thirsty.'" The words flowed out. This breakthrough was enormously gratifying. Upon returning to church, I found that aphasia affected my ability to understand the sermon. I had difficulty identifying and interacting with the sacred, and again I felt isolated. However, I found that listening to the choir allowed me to reconnect spiritually. My father, a good tenor, suggested we attend the adult choir rehearsals and sing in the Sunday morning worship. Although I had difficulty understanding sharps and flats, I found that I could still sing well. As I struggled through understanding scales and attempting to sing "do, re, mi, ..." choir practice became a means of salvation—a holy and sacred time for worship.

One proud moment came when I sang in the choir's performance of composer Alice Parker's "Martyrs Mirror," a difficult cantata to sing due to the dissonant music. Over time, and with practice, I was able to sing the magnificent piece with the choir, with the composer directing. This again became a way to connect with the spiritual part of my being.

People with aphasia need other people in their lives who are involved in helping them communicate.

In music I also have found a way to connect with God. Music brought language and meaning back to my life. Singing is possible because of the areas of the brain where music is interpreted and formed. The damage in my brain was on the right side, but music is developed on the left side. Now when I sit in church, I find that old familiar songs are my favorites; new songs are challenges waiting to be met. Either can be a path to the Savior.

Music in any form or style can be therapeutic for someone needing to connect with others, himself or herself or God. Studies have shown that some patients with Alzheimer's can remember musical pieces from their childhood. Nurses singing for or with a patient can build a significant bond and help them recapture meaning and expression. Consider quietly singing to patients who are confused, lonely, afraid or demented.

Significant losses: What have I lost because of aphasia? I am a trained social worker, but I work as a housekeeper. After I had gone through some rehabilitation therapy, I went back to the social service department in the hospital where I had worked before my stroke. Sadly, that job lasted only a week. It was too difficult to handle. I yearn for the possibility of in-depth discussions with fellow professionals. At the psychiatric hospital where I work, many of the staff know about my condition. We talk with each other, but because it takes time for me to comprehend what someone says and then respond, it is difficult to carry on a conversation with busy professionals.

I was going through a divorce when I had my stroke, and I remain single. I would like to pursue a relationship with a woman, but it is hard to find things in common or build relationships when there are such great communication barriers. This applies to all of my relationships, not just with women. Although my family has been supportive, I find I need more than my brother, sister and mother can provide.

This story illustrates my final point. Early in my treatment, I was auditioning to sing in Handel's *Messiah*. I had difficulty communicating directly, so we focused only on music in the audition. The director expressed concern about my ability when he instructed me to sing down the scale. With aphasia, I found it impossible. Due to his lack of understanding of aphasia, I was not permitted to sing, even though I had sung Handel's *Messiah* every year in my church since I was 15.

The point? People with aphasia need other people in their lives who are involved in helping them communicate. Had someone been with me at the audition to help explain my condition and advocate for me, things might have turned out differently. From the understanding and strength shown by my friends in the Goshen Aphasic Support Group, to a friend's encouraging smile, without the support of others I would not be where I am today. My friend Don spends an hour or so each week as my resource person. He helps me solve computer problems, edits the draft articles I have dictated and helps me shape my proposals for presentations at conventions. Currently I am a member of the board of advisors for the National Aphasic Association. I regularly make presentations at national and regional health-related conventions, educating individuals in health care on helpful techniques for working with individuals who have aphasia.

Reprinted with permission of the Journal of Christian Nursing, *Vol. 23, Number 2, Spring 2006, www.ncf-jcn.org. John A. Liechty is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Jennifer Buchholz, a nursing student at Goshen College, assisted him with the article.*

Mennonites have their own book of hidden knowledge and alternative wisdom.

The Da Vinci Code, Martyrs Mirror and the faithful church

by Gerald Biesecker-Mast

Church history is all the rage in American culture these days. This current interest in the Christian past is being driven most significantly by Dan Brown's best-selling novel *The Da Vinci Code*, which has been on the New York Times Bestseller list for 160 weeks, as I write, and has been read by more than 60 million people.

At the same time, numerous spinoff books, both fictional and nonfictional, have sought to capitalize on the new market for church history. Books such as *The Templar Legacy*, *The Secret Supper*, *The Last Templar*, *The Jesus Papers*, *Misquoting Jesus*, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* and *The Gospel of Judas*, are all current bestsellers.

The Da Vinci Code has now been made into a feature-length film, which predictably has expanded the already bulging market for such books. And Christians have begun an intensive argument about whether the kind of story told by *The Da Vinci Code* is a helpful or harmful approach to our past.

Christians have begun an intensive argument about whether the kind of story told by *The Da Vinci Code* is a helpful or harmful approach to our past.

The Da Vinci Code story shares with its many knockoffs a common plot structure. The characters in these novels discover that the official history of the Christian church hides dark secrets that have been suppressed over the centuries through the use of violence and deception. A crucial figure in this deception is the emperor Constantine, whose identification of Christianity with his own political goals corrupts the church and silences its critics. The protagonists are engaged in an often dangerous journey of discovery that uncovers some aspect of this deception in order to make visible the truth of the past.

This story resembles the basic structure of church history familiar to Mennonites and other free-church adherents: a faithful early church that is eventually corrupted by worldly power and politics but ultimately renewed by the discovery of the truth. But there the resemblance ends.

'The divine feminine': In *The Da Vinci Code*, the secrets uncovered by the protagonists are found in documents that reveal that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and that he and Mary had a line of descendants who have until now been hidden from view. Furthermore, so the story goes, along with suppressing Jesus' marriage to Mary, the official church excluded convictions and practices of early Christianity that celebrated "the divine feminine."

A secret society—the Priory of Sion—is found to have protected this information over the centuries and celebrated Jesus' marriage and the "feminine principle" with sacred sexual rituals. A famous leader of the Priory of Sion—Leonardo Da Vinci—is found to have hinted at these secrets in his paintings, most notably his "Last Supper,"

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which the book's protagonists discover to include Mary Magdalene seated next to Jesus. A predictable violent struggle in the novel occurs between those who seek to protect these secrets and those who seek to solve a murder mystery by uncovering them.

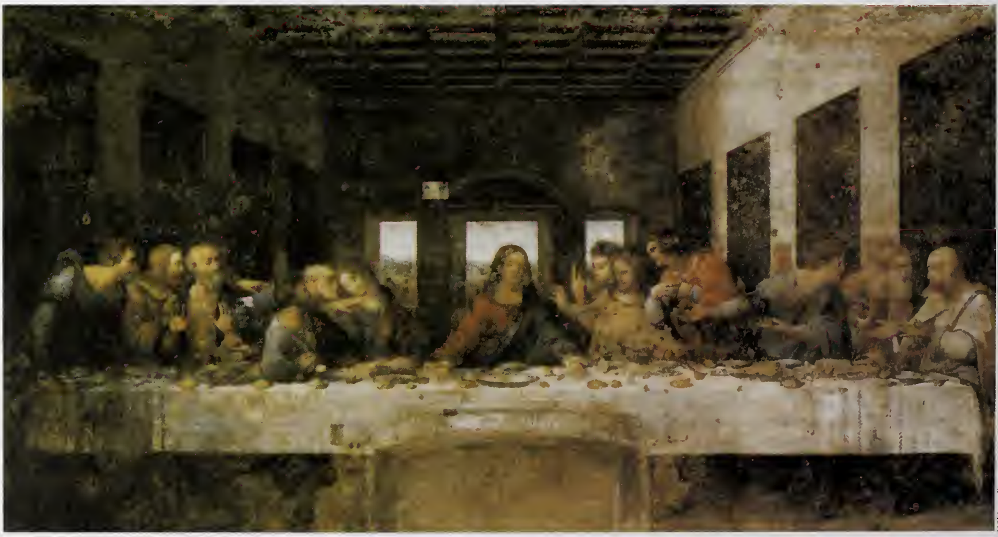
Although the novel is entertaining, and although the author claims that the historical data is true, most of these claims have been shown to be fraudulent by biblical scholars, church historians and art historians, who have produced their own lucrative market for books refuting the historical backdrop to *The Da Vinci Code*. Yet the basic plot structure about church history found in *The Da Vinci Code* and similar books remains fascinating and persuasive for millions of Americans. The recent publicity about the discovery of a new Gnostic gospel—one written from the perspective of Judas—is only the most recent example of the American public's interest in secret knowledge about the church's past, especially that found in noncanonical sources such as the Gnostic gospels, which challenges the legitimacy of the "official" church.

One response by Mennonites to this contemporary curiosity about the seamy underside of the historical church might be to dust off our own book of hidden knowledge and alternative wisdom—*The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians Who Baptized Only Upon Confession of Faith, and Who Suffered and Died for the Testimony of Jesus, Their Saviour, From the Time of Christ to the Year A.D. 1660*. This book is much larger than *The Da Vinci Code*—1,157 pages long—and can be purchased on the book market for under $30, only a few bucks more than the fancy illustrated gift edition of *The Da Vinci Code* (*Martyrs Mirror* is already well illustrated). While it has never made the New York Times Best Seller List, it has been in print much longer than *The Da Vinci Code* (nearly 350 years), and a few months ago I saw it on Herald Press' top 10 bestseller list.

Romance and passion: While *Martyrs Mirror* is not a fast-paced murder mystery, it is full of murder and intrigue, romance and passion, art and poetry. Although not likely to be finished in a weekend of speed reading, the *Martyrs Mirror* offers a lifetime of dramatic narratives and devotional texts oriented around the demands of disci-

Although the novel is entertaining, and although the author claims that the historical data is true, most of these claims have been shown to be fraudulent by biblical scholars, church historians and art historians.

Leonardo da Vinci: The Last Supper (1495-1498)



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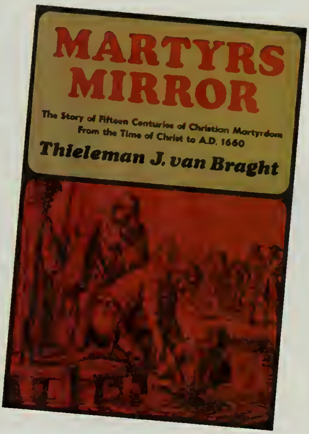
pleship as they conflict with the powers and authorities of the ages. I confess to having been repeatedly kept up at night by these stories, thrilled by the courage on display, traumatized by the terror of torture, moved by the intensity of human love and persuaded by the conviction of the testimonies. In at least three crucial ways, *Martyrs Mirror* offers a truthful account of the faithful church that challenges the emerging conventional wisdom of *The Da Vinci Code*.

1. In *The Da Vinci Code*, the truth about the past is discovered in secret texts—Gnostic gospels—that suggest the falsity or incompleteness of the canonical Scriptures. In *Martyrs Mirror*, the truth about the past is discovered in the lives of people who sought to live according to the truth on display in plain sight in the biblical canon. G.K. Chesterton once wrote that the problem with Christianity is "not that it has been tried and found wanting" but that "it has been found difficult and left untried." The great secret of *Martyrs Mirror* is not the obvious historical corruption of the church but the actual existence of a faithful church, obedient to the Scriptures and to Jesus Christ and triumphant over the powers throughout history. *Martyrs Mirror* demonstrates that real Christianity has been tried and tells the largely neglected story of those who sought—successfully—to live as Jesus taught—according to the Spirit and without weapons. Christoffel Fierens, before he was executed on Dec. 5, 1572, told the crowd: "Sell your clothes and buy Testaments; attend therein to the words of God: for therein you will find life."

2. *The Da Vinci Code* celebrates the suppressed principle of the eternal feminine in early Christianity. *Martyrs Mirror* celebrates the faithful femininity of Christian women who were liberated by gospel obedience from the worldly constraints of gendered family roles and spiritual silence. Nearly a third of the second book in *Martyrs Mirror*—which focuses on Reformation-era Anabaptists—deals with the lives and writings of Anabaptist women, many of whom put Christian faith ahead of role expectations. For example, in her letter to her husband, while they were both in prison, Lijsken Segers writes that she was asked by her interlocuters: "Why do you trouble yourself with the Scriptures? Attend to your sewing." Her husband, Jerome, responds, "Though they may tell you to attend to your sewing, this does not prevent us; for Christ has called us all."

3. In *The Da Vinci Code*, the secrets of the past are made public through a violent struggle against those forces and people who seek to protect those secrets. In *Martyrs Mirror*, the truth of the gospel is made public through a defenseless witness to the triumph of weakness over strength. "Two assemblies" are shown to exist in human history: the "congregation of Satan," which includes those "born by nature to seize and destroy," and the "congregation of Jesus," which includes "humble sheep" with "no desire for revenge" who "willingly gave their bodies for the name of the Lord." In both *The Da Vinci Code* and *Martyrs Mirror*, the power of evil is confronted by heroic and courageous protagonists. But the confrontation in *Martyrs Mirror* is undertaken through the power of defenseless witness, rather than with weapons. Pieter van Olman, executed at Ghent in 1552, acknowledged this struggle when he noted that the authorities "approach us with such subtle questions and honeyed words." Much of the drama in *Martyrs Mirror* revolves around the creative responses and arguments made by Anabaptist Christians who spoke convincingly from a position of weakness against the "honeyed words" of the powerful.


MARTYRS MIRROR
The Story of Fifteen Centuries of Christian Martyrdom From the Time of Christ to A.D. 1660
Thieleman J. van Braght

In *Martyrs Mirror*, the truth of the gospel is made public through a defenseless witness to the triumph of weakness over strength.

As Mennonites discuss *The Da Vinci Code* and other similar contemporary accounts of church history with our neighbors, we should not miss an opportunity to introduce friends (and maybe even ourselves) to the secrets all too often hidden away in our own book of church history. For as Thieleman J. van Braght, the compiler of *Martyrs Mirror*, wrote in his preface, "Men are more easily converted by good examples than by good teachings, because examples are more impressive; yet here you have both."

Gerald J. Biesecker-Mast is associate professor of communication at Bluffton (Ohio) University.

Feel connected and renewed at San José

Rachel Swartzendruber is associate director for convention planning for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership.

I attended my first Mennonite convention at age 15—Wichita 1995. I remember vividly the long van trip from Kalona, Iowa, playing games in the halls of the convention center and feeling annoyed by all the beach balls flying around during worship services. And, to be perfectly honest, I remember being delighted by how many cute Mennonite boys actually existed. More importantly, I remember walking into the worship hall, my eyes wide, in awe of the sheer number of Mennonites who had come together for worship. At that moment I realized I was a part of a "church" that reaches far beyond my home congregation of Lower Deer Creek. I realized I was not alone in my spiritual journey.

The convention experience brings a sense of connectedness to us as Christians and as Mennonites and provides opportunity for spiritual renewal.

I was sold on the convention experience early on for two main reasons. First, convention brings a sense of connectedness to us as Christians and as Mennonites. I will never forget how I felt at Orlando 1997 when the entire Mennonite audience at the Sea World Shamu Show started singing "606" ("Praise God From Whom all Blessings Flow"). I can still picture the view I had looking up from my seat at the rows and rows of Mennonites standing together and singing that familiar hymn.

Second, convention provides opportunity for spiritual renewal. At Wichita 1995, five Indiana teens not only welcomed me as a friend but literally surrounded me with Christ's love, laying hands on me and taking turns praying for me after I had recommitted my life to Christ. As an exhibiter at Atlanta 2003, I attended a worship service in which Luke Hartman challenged us to remember that God chooses all of us, even when we find ourselves on the outside. He also explained how even though we are chosen by God, we also have to choose back. That service made me ask myself, Have I chosen God?

Shortly after finishing my master's degree in communication at Wichita (Kan.) State University this spring, I joined Executive Leadership's Convention Planning team as its associate director. In this role I am reminded each day of what an enormous responsibility our team has as we plan for the next convention, San José 2007.

This convention will provide chances for fun and fellowship as well as opportunities to come again and feel connected to the rest of Mennonite Church USA. Having a convention in the west gives us a chance to enact what being a part of Mennonite Church USA means. We are more than one person, one congregation, one youth group, one conference or one race or ethnicity. We span the nation and have members calling each corner of this country home, including the far west. Mennonites in California are long overdue for a visit.

San José 2007 will also provide opportunities for youth and adults to enact our convention theme, "Live the Call!" rooted in Ephesians 4:1-6. Whether you are coming from south Texas; Lancaster, Pa.; San Francisco or Milford, Neb., this convention is being designed to help you discern your individual, unique call. Your call may include reaching out to those on the fringes to create space for people to ask questions. Perhaps you will feel called to focus intentionally on spreading peace in our country, now engaged in war. Or maybe your call is to continue discerning and preparing for what Christ has in store for you.

One thing for sure is that we are all called to follow Christ joyfully into the world. Please come and feel connected and renewed. Come find out what God is going to show us in San José and what "Live the Call!" will look like for Mennonite Church USA and for you as an individual. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **A sacrament and a song**—Katherine Donnelly
- **Evangelism and the church in your house**—John M. Drescher
- **Becoming friends in Senegal**—Adam Fleming

Making peace at the Table of the Lord

Mennonites and Catholics consider God's presence at the 'tables of our lives.'

Having looked in past meetings at violence, discipleship and friendship, this year's meeting of Bridgefolk (www.bridgefolk.net) took on the delicate subject of "Table fellowship," or how to address Mennonites' and Catholics' different understandings of Communion.

Mennonites and Catholics have been gathering annually since 2002 under the name Bridgefolk to "celebrate each other's traditions, explore each other's practices and honor each other's contribution to the mission of Christ's church," according to its mission statement. This year's conference, held June 29-July 2 at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minn., brought together 44 participants (22 Mennonites and 22 Catholics, though some individuals claim to be both).

Abbot John Klassen acknowledged that "Table fellowship has been at the edge of our conversation all along," but with the trust built up over four previous meetings, the Bridgefolk board now felt ready to address it directly, he said.

The conference theme, "Making Peace: At Table, in the World," encompassed seven sessions and included what Marlene Kropf, who with Klassen serves as board co-chair, called "the many tables of our lives." She asked, "How do we celebrate God's presence at our tables?"

Three panel presentations, each including a Mennonite and a Catholic, looked at making peace at domestic, local and world tables. Mennonite Joetta Handrich Schlabach and Catholic Dolores Dufner talked about the importance of table manners, whether in a family or a monastic setting.

Catholic Joe McLellan narrated his experiences with Hutterites, while Mennonite Darrin Snyder Belousek described meetings of Mennonites and Catholics in northern Indiana, where they had dialogues about church history, eccesiology, baptism and Communion.

Mennonite Susan Classen related her experiences as a Mennonite Central Committee worker in Central America and now as a spiritual director in a Catholic community in Kentucky. She said we can extend our table (add new leaves) only so far; then we need a new framework. Catholics Fred and Jeanette Birondo-Goddard spoke about their work in the Philippines with children. Their children's centers became "zones of peace" that reminded people that peace is an option.

Mennonite Randy Spaulding led an evening hymn sing on June 30, and Dufner introduced a hymn text she had written.

On July 1, Fr. William Skudlarek presented the Catholic Communion tradition, drawing on the second-century writings of Justin Martyr. He referred to an encyclical by Pope John Paul II that marked a change in Catholic requirements for open Communion. Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church who "greatly desire to receive these sacraments, freely request them and manifest the faith which the Catholic Church professes with regard to these sacraments" may participate, according to the encyclical.

Eleanor Kreider presented the Mennonite Communion tradition, acknowledging that no two Mennonite congregations celebrate Communion the same. She referred to an image used by Classen of different wells tapping into the same aquifer to "drink deeply of the grace of God."

That afternoon, Klassen and Kropf led a time of meeting at tables in small groups around the question, What does peacemaking at the Lord's Table mean for Bridgefolk? The participants, Mennonite and Catholic, expressed the pain they feel of the division in the broader church.

Later, Klassen offered to celebrate a Mass with only the Bridgefolk participants. In a closing session the following morning, many expressed awe at the unexpected grace of that Eucharist. What that experience means for Bridgefolk remains unclear. One small group called it "a profound experience of hope." Another group said that "we proceed with gentleness and care and continue to live with the tension." The concluding worship time included a footwashing service.

Next year's conference will be held July 26-29 in Elkhart, Ind.—*Gordon Houser*

Table fellowship has been at the edge of our conversation all along.
—Abbot John Klassen

Gordon Houser

At the ice cream table: Margie Pfeil, Stanley Kropf and Susan Classen talk July 1 during an ice cream social at the annual Bridgefolk conference.

Elkhart, Ind., building project on hold

Board worries about perceptions of 'people in the pew,' wants more counsel.

After three years of planning and a feasibility study showing that donors are ready to contribute, the plan to construct a new office building in Elkhart, Ind., for Mennonite Church USA staff is on hold. During its meeting in Denver June 29-July 1, the Executive Board declined to approve the project.

The proposed building would be located adjacent to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary's campus and would have 23,000 square feet of finished office space. Although Mennonite Mission Network would raise the money, the building would serve as a regional office for all Mennonite Church USA agencies; it would be called, "Mennonite Church USA Elkhart Offices."

The price tag of $9,365,000 includes a $2.9 million endowment and $470,000 for the cost of a fund-raising campaign. If the campaign is successful, there would be no debt on the building, and the endowment would pay all operating costs. That means that no rent would be charged to denominational agencies wishing to locate staff there.

Nearly all Executive Board members supported the project, but few were ready to let Mennonite Mission Network proceed.

"We're saying, Yes, but not yet," said Executive Board member Patty Shelly.

Executive Board members listed several reasons why they were not ready to proceed. Jim Harder, who chairs the board's Resources Committee, noted that the church does not have a successful track record with fund-raising campaigns. As evidence, he cited the (former) General Conference Mennonite Church's Call to Kingdom Commitments campaign that "fell short" and Mennonite Publishing Network's less-than-successful drive to reduce its debt.

But the Executive Board's own financial woes (see page 21) complicated board members' support for such a campaign.

"What will be the perception in the pew," said past-moderator Duane Oswald, "if we launch a campaign to build a building while we can't fund our operations?"

Some wondered how such a campaign would be perceived in light of other financial issues.

"What's the perception," Cleon Claassen asked, "when Mennonite Publishing Network is $3 million in debt and another agency has a big fund drive?"

After two lengthy discussions, the Executive Board tabled the proposal until their January 2007 meeting. In the meantime, they will take counsel on the proposal from the Constituency Leaders Council and other groups across the church. The board also asked Mission Network leaders to explore options, such as a "private-church" arrangement in which an individual builds the building and then leases it to the church.

Mennonite Mission Network board, meeting July 6-9 in Harrisonburg, Va., expressed readiness to move forward with the project and a commitment to work with Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board to provide information so that plans can proceed in a timely manner.

Mission Network board members also affirmed the work of Advancement Associates Inc., in determining the feasibility of such a campaign.

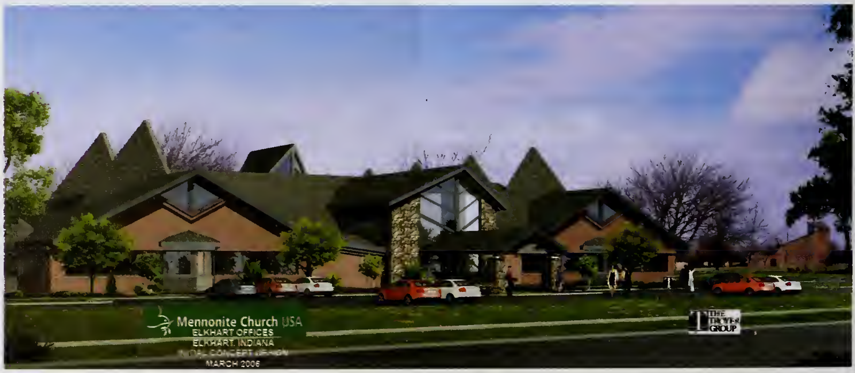
"This [building project] will be a great symbol of the united church for the global church," said Mennonite Mission Network board member Tesfatsion Dalellew.

Sharon Waltner, Mennonite Church USA moderator-elect, and Ron Byler, Executive Leadership associate executive director, attended the

Continued on page 23

What will be the perception in the pew if we launch a campaign to build a building while we can't fund our operations?
—Duane Oswald

At right is one of several concepts for a Mennonite Church USA regional office building adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. AMBS's Sermon on the Mount chapel is in the background.



Executive Board faces another deficit

Hopes that a "second transformation" will rectify problems in funding system.

Faced with a mandate to review the structure of Mennonite Church USA in 2007 and its own dwindling budget, Executive Board set a process in motion to address both during its meeting in Denver June 29-July 1.

Over the last four years, Executive Board has lost an aggregate of $816,976—or approximately 25 percent of the "buying power" it had in 2002. Its most recent fiscal year ended on Jan. 31 with net income of $404,753 (see box).

However, without a Charlotte 2005 convention margin of $518,313, the combined budget would have ended with a loss of $113,560. The Church Extension Service budget is not combined with the Executive Board's.

"This is not tolerable for the long-term," said executive secretary Jim Schrag, who described the Executive Board as the mortar that holds all the bricks of the denominational structure together.

"Our role of working for the good of everyone can result in the perception that we are working for the good of no one," Schrag said. "Be it an agency or a conference, a school or a congregation, each wants to know what we do for them in particular."

Schrag hopes that a comprehensive review of denominational structures in 2007—mandated in documents approved during the formation of Mennonite Church USA in 2001—will be a "second transformation" that rectifies problems in the current funding system.

Listening to the owners: At each meeting, Executive Board members meet with leaders from the area conference that hosts their meeting. Four leaders from the newly formed Mountain States Mennonite Conference joined the board to report on their progress and to describe what kind of help the denomination might provide.

"It's a little hard to know what you can help us with," said Don Rheinheimer, pastor at Mountain Community Mennonite Church in Palmer Lake, Colo., "because in a real sense we don't know where we're going. When you follow passions and go through open doors, nothing is predictable."

Vern Rempel, pastor at First Mennonite Church of Denver, will replace Barry Bartel as the conference's moderator this fall when Bartel leaves to assume the presidency at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan.

"Our faithfulness to God is somehow tied to our effort to be multiethnic," Rempel said.

Racial/ethnic tag-alongs: Executive Board also met conjointly with the Mennonite Education Agency board. During a short session when the two boards were together, Executive Board members were able to inquire about the schools and programs MEA oversees.

Everett J. Thomas

Executive Board members prayed for Ted Stuckey, Mennonite Church USA's director of administration, who will leave his position Aug. 31 after 30 years of service with General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church USA. Executive Board does not plan to replace Stuckey; his duties will be distributed among current Executive Leadership staff and Mennonite Mission Network staff.

Executive Board member Leslie Francisco III wanted to know why the Racial Ethnic Leadership Education (RELE) fund was declining.

"From an African-American perspective," said Francisco, "[the RELE] program works but the funding [is declining]. I want to be sure the racial/ethnic groups aren't just a tag-along. Are we still on the back burner?"

MEA executive director Carlos Romero reported that after four straight years of declining revenue, the picture may be changing.

"We might see a small increase [in funding] for both RELE and MEA," Romero said. MEA's fiscal year ends on June 30; fiscal year end results will not be available for several months.

The Executive Board meets again Sept. 21-23 in San José, Calif., to inspect the convention facilities contracted for the San José 2007 assembly.
—*Everett J. Thomas*

Our faithfulness to God is somehow tied to our effort to be multiethnic.
—Vern Rempel

MC USA Fiscal Year 2006

Executive Leadership	
Total income	$3,025,013
Total expenditures	3,138,573
Net annual revenue (loss)	(113,560)
Charlotte 2005 Convention	
Income	$2,276,410
Expenses	1,758,097
Convention net income/loss	518,313
Church Extension Services, Inc.	
Loans receivable	$4,184,800
Certificates payable	4,899,692
Net profit (loss)	160,003

Source: Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. All numbers audited.

Former inmate now has prison ministry

Mennonite Broadcast's Bible study courses brought troubled youth to Christ.

Scorched certificates: Maloney

Timothy K. Maloney got into trouble as a young man. Breaking into a house and several stores landed him in jail. Then he received a 10-year jail sentence with the Maryland Division of Corrections. The sentence changed his life and the lives of hundreds of others through his influence, and Mennonite Media (then Mennonite Broadcasts Inc.) played a significant part.

This makes you wonder who will be the Tim Maloney 25 years from now who comes back to tell us thank you, you changed my life.—Burton Buller

A recent disaster sent him searching for those responsible for part of his turnaround and he shared his story with Mennonite Media staff.

Growing up, Maloney was Roman Catholic but never active in his faith or church. While in prison, a volunteer from Good News Mission helped him come to an active faith in Christ and introduced him to Bible correspondence courses as a way to grow as a Christian disciple.

From the 1950s through the early 1980s, Home Bible Studies were offered by (then) Mennonite Broadcasts as a follow-up to its radio programs heard widely across the United States. and Canada (and some other countries), such as The Mennonite Hour, Heart to Heart and Way to Life.

Maloney completed all the Bible correspondence courses he could find and longed for more. He started researching what was available and eventually came across the Mennonite Bible study courses, which were used and available free in many prisons across the country.

At one time, Mennonite Broadcasts had a full-time director, several part-time Bible study instructors and volunteers who graded the lessons—at one point processing up to 35,000 lessons in one year. Each course of 12-15 lessons had a study sheet that students completed and mailed in for comment and correction. Instructors often added individual encouragement and Bible counseling.

At the end of each course, students received a signed certificate of achievement. Maloney received more than 300 of these certificates.

"I was proud of those certificates," Maloney says. "I kept busy completing courses. I tried to never be led astray in teachings, if people tried to tell me things that I knew weren't correct. These courses were essentially my Sunday school, since I grew up in a home that didn't actively practice Christianity."

On Christmas Eve 2002, Maloney's home burned to the ground. In the ruins he found scorched certificates. He decided to try and replace the certificates.

Anna Marie Steckley was an instructor who worked at Mennonite Broadcasts from 1974 until her retirement in the early 1980s. She graded the lessons for the six courses Maloney took between March 1980 and April 1981. He tracked down Steckley and asked whether there was any way he could get new certificates? Lowell Hertzler, current business manager for Mennonite Media, hunted for copies of the blank certificates in the Mennonite Media vault, made copies and had Steckley sign fresh copies for Maloney.

"Anna Marie and everyone I dealt with there was so nice and helpful. I think I was a bit of a puzzlement, though, because I went through Bible studies like a knife through butter," says Maloney.

Through the years Maloney has come full circle. He has his own prison ministry out of Dry Ridge, Ky., offering Bible study courses to those incarcerated. The lessons are focused on just studying the stories and words in the Bible, not theology from any one group or denomination.

Mennonite Media has continued for more than 55 years, picking up new forms of ministry as technology changes.

"We get many responses currently, but this makes you wonder who will be the Tim Maloney 25 years from now who comes back to tell us thank you, you changed my life," says Burton Buller, director of Mennonite Media since 1999.
—Melodie Davis of Mennonite Mission Network

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Values-Based Leadership Program

Village needed aid in 2000, now gives it

Kenyan Maasai are sending Janzen couple to Canada as mission workers.

Six years ago, Jeremy and Jennifer Janzen's plane dropped to the runway in Nairobi, Kenya, along with the first rains that broke a devastating drought.

The Maasai immediately dubbed Jen "Nolari," bringer of rain, and Jer "Lemayian," the blessing.

Then last December, ironically, as the Janzens prepared to say goodbye to Maasailand—ending their second term of service with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM)—a second killer dry season began to ravage Kenya.

"In February the sky still looked unpromising, and we feared that our time here would end in tragedy," Jer says. "But then the rains started, and people told us, 'It's good that you're leaving now so that your names will remain a blessing.'"

While both droughts were equally devastating to the multitudes of livestock they destroyed and the widespread hunger that resulted, the Janzens noted an amazing difference between how the two droughts affected the village of Olepolos.

The physical environment had remained the same, but something had changed in the spirit of the community. In 2000, Olepolos was forced to rely on food aid to survive, just like many communities did this year. But in 2006, Olepolos didn't need to receive any aid. Instead, church and community members donated maize from their storehouses to outside communities that were starving.

Six years ago the people of Olepolos didn't even have storehouses, let alone surplus maize. Six years ago they didn't have the vision to see other communities as more needy than they were. Six years ago Olepolos received. This year they gave.

Photo supplied

On a visit the Janzens made to the Maasai homestead where they first lived and studied the Maa language six years ago, Ngoto Nailalie, their first Maasai "Mom," holds Juniper, her "grandchild," while Jen and other members of the household look on.

"Our work hasn't brought this success," the Janzens say. "Neither has the work of the Olepolos community or Eastern Mennonite Missions. Neither has God—all by himself. It's the partnership between God and humanity that has brought the success—the people of Olepolos, the missionaries, mission agencies, and supporters. Without you partnering together with Olepolos and God, the last six years would not have been a success.

"Now Olepolos is sending us as their missionaries to Canada," the Janzens say. "Our vision is to take their vision to our home country and beyond. And what is the Olepolos vision? 'Every life transformed by Christ—in Olepolos and beyond.'" *—Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Building project

(Continued from page 20)

meeting on behalf of the full Executive Board.

"The participation of the Executive Board representatives was a very positive part of the meeting," said Peter Graber, senior executive for advancement with Mennonite Mission Network and capital campaign manager for the project. "I was pleased to see the healthy, positive interaction [among] board members. It seems like we're on track to reach a good decision together."

Mennonite Church USA currently leases space in an 83-year-old office building in downtown Elkhart. The current building has not been renovated since 1974, and future occupancy is uncertain. The new building would not replace Mennonite Media offices in Harrisonburg or the Great Plains office in Newton, Kan.*—Everett J. Thomas and Mennonite Mission Network*

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Lancaster leaders call for Jubilee gifts

Ask for up to 2 percent of annual income for church in the global South

Leaders of the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference have challenged members of their congregations to donate up to 2 percent of their annual income to their faith family in the global South.

Inspired by the biblical teaching of Jubilee, the challenge is a step toward greater economic parity in the global Anabaptist church.

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) established a Global Church Sharing Fund in 1997 with initial individual and group donations of $1 million. Money from this fund is distributed to Anabaptist churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America according to a fair-share formula to assist them in advancing their ministries.

"These sisters and brothers give us many gifts, renewing the life of the global church while extending God's kingdom. They are the ones who will lead in determining what it means to live as Anabaptist Christians in the 21st century," says Larry Miller, MWC general secretary.

At this time, however, 95 percent of the financial wealth of Anabaptists remains with North Americans and Europeans, even though 60 percent of the 1.4 million baptized believers in 13,000 local churches in 200 national conferences are in the global South.

Several African leaders—most of them members of the MWC General Council—visited Lancaster churches following the MWC mini-assembly in Pasadena, Calif., in March.

They shared with the Pennsylvania conference their gifts of profound faith, spirituality and wisdom as well as their observations of the North American church. In response, Keith Weaver, Lancaster Mennonite Conference moderator, and Richard Showalter, president of Eastern Mennonite Missions, the mission arm of the conference, called their constituency to share its financial wealth with African, Asian and Latin American sisters and brothers through the MWC Global Church Sharing Fund.

Churches in the South that receive money through this fund decide how they will use the gift. Funds have helped translate and publish materials; trained leaders; paid pastors' salaries; bought land; constructed, repaired and equipped church buildings; purchased bicycles for evangelists and promoted Anabaptist identity and belonging.
—Ferne Burkhardt for Mennonite World Conference

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– Mark J. Suderman, D.M.A.
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director of choral activities,
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Tsunami survivor in self-help group

Mennonite Central Committee partner provides low-cost emergency loans.

On the morning of Dec. 26, 2004, Govindamma was near the shore in Chinnatheru, her small fishing village in India's Tamil Nadu state, when she saw a huge wall of water rising above her and blocking out the sky. In the moments before the wall of water came crashing down on her, she somehow wrapped her sari to a bar that boats were tied to and thought, "This is it—I am dying." A moment later she thought, "I cannot die. My son needs me."

A stranger (or perhaps, she says, it was an angel) found her floating and unconscious. He hauled her to a rescue station, where she regained consciousness several hours later.

Govindamma cannot explain how it is that she lived through the tsunami, but she knows why she lives, and that is to look after her son. Silam Barasan, Govindamma's teenage son, is her reason for living. Illiterate herself, she knows that his education is critical to his future happiness and to her well-being in old age.

Govindamma sells fish and earns about $1 a day. Until recently she had no savings, and the closest thing she had to a retirement plan was the hope that her son will one day take care of her.

For her son: Govindamma

Several months ago Govindamma began saving money by participating in a project organized by Social Unit for Community Health and Improvement (SUCHI), an organization that partners with Mennonite Central Committee to help tsunami survivors. She bought a bicycle for her son for about $7, which she took from her savings. Now he travels to school by bicycle and spends less time on the road and more time studying.

Govindamma is also participating in a women's self-help group that SUCHI helped organize in her village. The group lends money to its members without charging interest. Govindamma knows that, should her son get sick or should she need to repair the roof of her shack, she can pay for the necessary goods or services without borrowing from a local moneylender at an exorbitant rate.
—Tim Shenk for Mennonite Central Committee.

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Visa denials spark policy change ideas

Mennonite leaders send letter to U.S. Secretary of State Condolezza Rice.

Current U.S. policy and practice are not working for church organizations seeking visas for international guests. Leaders of several Mennonite agencies, in a June 21 letter, appealed to Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Secretary of State, to consider policy changes.

The letter to Secretary Rice proposed that church agencies be consulted when officials are making visa determinations. Further suggestions included having a senior consular officer conduct a second interview in cases where there is a question about an applicant and that interview practices be adjusted to be more culturally sensitive.

Church organizations often bring international church leaders to the United States to meet with congregations and to attend conferences and training events. The guests—many from countries in conflict—frequently are seeking practical and theological help in peace building for their countries of origin. Denying them visas "seems to be counter to U.S. national security," said the letter.

Of particular concern, noted the letter, is the practice of holding young U.S. consular officers personally liable for every visa they approve, making visa denials appear arbitrary.

"[Secretary] Rice is certainly in a position to make changes to the visa application practice," said J. Daryl Byler from Mennonite Central Committee's Washington office. "The current practice is not something legislated by Congress, so it is within her authority to change it."

The letter was signed by Mennonite World Conference president Nancy Heisey and MWC general secretary Larry Miller; Robb Davis, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee; Richard Showalter, president of Eastern Mennonite Missions; and Ruth Hoover Zimmerman, co-director Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. All the agencies represented have exemplary records of inviting internationals who do return to their homes.

The June 21 letter to Secretary Rice was a new initiative following an April 26 visit to Washington, where the same leaders met with Julie Furuta-Toy, director for the Office of Public and Diplomatic Liaison. Furuta-Toy promised to research the visa denials experienced by international delegates to the MWC General Council meeting in Pasadena, Calif., in March, which she apparently did. Her responses, however, did not offer much new insight, said Heisey, prompting Heisey and Showalter to propose writing a letter directly to Secretary Rice.

"We felt the administration needed to consider more seriously the commitments and involvements of the church in sponsoring leaders in fellowship visits to the United States," said Heisey. *—Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference*

[Secretary] Rice is certainly in a position to make changes to the visa application practice.
—J. Daryl Byler

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Mennonite Central Committee

CALENDAR

Antiracism training, Sept. 21-23, **James Street Mennonite Church**, Lancaster, Pa. Thurs. 5-9 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Co-sponsored by Atlantic Coast Conference and MCC East Coast. Registration fee $200. Contact 717-699-2317 or ekraybill@hotmail.com for more information.

Music and Drama Family Camp, July 29-Aug. 3, **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center**, Mount Pleasant, Pa. A unique opportunity to join other music and drama enthusiasts of all ages for a week of singing, playing music, readers' theatre, arts and crafts, swimming and recreation. Contact: Cheryl Paulovich at Cheryl@laurelville.org or 800-839-1021; www.laurelville.org.

Wellman (Iowa) Mennonite Church, *Centennial Celebration*, Aug. 5 and 6. Theme: Rooted in Faith-Growing Love. Guest speaker: Ron Kennel. For more information phone 319-646-2532 or e-mail wmchurch@netins.net.

WORKERS

Weaver, Herm, was ordained June 25 and will become conference minister of Mountain States Mennonite Conference Aug. 1.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Correction: In the June 6 issue, the middle name of **Alissa Elliott** was incorrect. Instead of Alissa Jaye Elliott, it should have been Alissa Faye Elliott.

Bachman, Lane Patrick, June 5, to Brandan Bachman and Sheri Reeder, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Bontrager, Maxwell James, June 14, to Michael and Tina Holmes Bontrager, Indianapolis.

Coleman, Silas Jude, April 15, to Chip and Martha Kratzer Coleman, Dalton, Ohio.

Copeland, Natalie Davis, June 13, to Kim and Jeff Copeland, Pasadena, Calif.

Duerksen, Haniah Avery, June 16, to Lucius and Megan Jacks Duerksen, Macon, Mo.

Dugan, Asa Robert, April 7, to David and Mary Jantzi Dugan, Morris, N.Y.

Gingerich, Luke Abram, June 9, to Blaine and Jodie Rudolph Gingerich, Kouts, Ind.

Gross, Sarah Elizabeth, May 21, to Daryl and Joelle Detwiler Gross, Westover, Md.

Hanson, Daniel Lee III, June 3, to Dan and Nicole Hanson, Pasadena, Calif.

Hertzler, Milo Fletcher, May 7, to Shelby and Jodi Nisly Hertzler, Harrisonburg, Va.

King, Aiden Jay, June 21, to Mark and Julia Burkholder King, Toledo, Ohio.

Klug, Colby James, May 12, to Jeff and Jody Stutzman Klug, Pleasant Dale, Neb.

Magatti, Shemaya Hirschler, April 23, to Tobias and Lenora Hirschler-Magatti, Kendallville, Ind.

Mast, Tristan Perry, June 17, to Brian and Cheryl Kaufman Mast, Goshen, Ind.

Miller, Audrey Elizabeth, June 16, to Ryan and Heidi Kauffman Miller, Hartville, Ohio.

Nolt, Tyler Justin, June 15, to Ryan and Pat Dehoff Nolt, Lititz, Pa.

Widrick, Blake Stanley, May 28, to Jason and Krista Roggie Widrick, Carthage, N.Y.

MARRIAGES

Atkins/Rolon: Sade Atkins, Columbus, Ohio, and Miguel (Mike) Rolon, Columbus, Ohio, June 10 at Sharon Woods Baptists, Columbus.

Bowne/Schreiner: Allison Bowne, Burbank, Calif., and Barrett Schreiner, Pasadena, Calif., June 3 at the Athenauem, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena.

Brubacher/Harley: Jesse Brubacher, Walton, Kan., and Sharyn Harley, New Paris, Ind., April 22 at Krause Estate, Lawrence, Kan.

Bussard/Rupp: Danielle Bussard, Nappanee, Ind., and Jason Rupp, Wakarusa, Ind., June 17 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Caron/Scarbery: Tom Caron, Fresno, Calif., and Sheena Scarbery, Fresno, June 10 at Wolf Lakes, Fresno.

Ciesielski/Miller: Jennifer Ciesielski, Independence, Iowa, and Mike Miller, Wayland, Iowa, June 17 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Dugger/Loewen: Alex Dugger, Martinsburg, W.V., and Emma Loewen, Goshen, Ind., June 24 at Reith Recital Hall, Goshen (Ind.) College.

Friesen/Klingenberg: Cassie Friesen, Henderson, Neb., and Brett Klingenberg, Peabody, Kan., June 3 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Friesen Roth/West: Janice Friesen Roth, Wichita, Kan., and Tom West, Wichita, June 17 at the home of the bride, Wichita.

Gerber/Stellingwerf: Linda Gerber, Goshen, Ind., Michael Stellingwerf, Gosehn, Ind., May 19 at Greene Road Church, Goshen, Ind.

Graber/Petersen: Gina Graber, Crawfordsville, Iowa, and Chris Petersen, Audubon, Iowa, May 27 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Lehman/Neuenschwander: Aleah Lehman, Apple Creek, Ohio, and Kent Neuenschwander, Dalton, Ohio, May 27 at Mennonite Christian Assembly, Fredericksburg, Ohio.

Nickel/Voth: Kenton Nickel, Goessel, Kan., and Eunice Voth, Goessel, June 3 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Osborn/Wiens: Justin Osborn, Harrisonville, Mo., and Danae Wiens, Buhler, Kan., June 17.

Overholt/Weaver: Regina Overholt, Hartville, Ohio, and Ray Weaver, Uniontown, Ohio, June 18 in Hartville.

Rhodes/Stutzman: Christina Rhodes, Bourbon, Ind., and Michael Stutzman, Goshen, Ind., July 1 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Sauder/Wyse: Megan Sauder, Archbold, Ohio, and Jamison Wyse, Archbold, June 17 at Archbold Evangelical Mennonite Church.

Steiner/Zuercher: Joy Steiner, Mt. Eaton, Ohio, and Tim Zuercher, Orrville, Ohio, June 10 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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"For The Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

DEATHS

Bavis, Michael P. Jr., 24, Telford, Pa., died June 16. Parents: David and Joan M. Derbyshire Sheetz. Child: Michael Patrick Bavis, III. Funeral: June 21 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Goerzen, Tina Janzen, 88, Reedley, Calif., died June 20. Spouse: Abe Goerzen (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Maria Friesen Janzen. Children: Hans, Ron, Donald, Marlena Loewen; 12 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 28 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Good, Nancy, 67, Valparaiso, Ind., died June 22. Parents: Ora and Lydia Sutter Gut. Burial: June 25 at Hopewell Mennonite Cemetery, Kouts, Ind.

Haws, Ernest D., 88, Schwenksville, Pa., died June 13. Spouse: Edna Freed Haws. Parents: Llewelyn and Elsie Reppert Haws. Children: Patricia Kuestner, Pamela Rakowski, Robin Nice; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 17 at Hersteins Mennonite Church, Schwenksville.

King, Cleta Mae Kurtz, 93, Champaign, Ohio, died June 11. Spouse: Floyd Y. King (deceased). Parents: Orvin and Maida Hershberger Kurtz. Children: Calvin, Walter, We, Duane, Harlan; 12 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 15 at South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio.

Kreider, Elvin N., 80, Manheim, Pa., died June 15. Spouse: Mabel L. Hackman Kreider. Parents: Benjamin R. and Virginia Nolt Kreider. Children: Kenneth L., Ronald E., James E., Carol Ann Buchen; 15 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Livengood, Betty Taylor, 75, Keyser, W.V., died May 22. Spouse: Paul Myron Livengood. Parents: Thomas and Lillian Osborne Taylor. Children: Judith Brenneman, Paul Taylor; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 26 at Pinto (Md.) Mennonite Church.

Maust, Joseph Sr., 98, Pigeon, Mich., died June 16. Spouse: Emma Fisher Maust. Parents: Joseph and Lydia Hochstetler Maust. Children: Myra Gerstenschlager, Joseph J., Doug; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Miller, Bertha, 93, Lititz, Pa., died June 13. Spouse: Paul Miller (deceased). Children: Rebecca Fast, John, James, Rosemary Miller Fitzsimmons; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at Landis Homes, Lititz.

Miller, Ellen Bachman, 79, Parnell, Iowa, died June 18. Spouse: Marvin J. Miller. Parents: Aaron and Emma Egli Bachman. Children: George, Sherlyn Jantzi, Frank; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 21 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Ortman, Walter A., 84, Freeman, S.D., died June 25. Spouse: Leora Graber Ortman. Parents: August K. and Caroline Waltner Ortman. Children: Ross, Karl. Funeral: June 28 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Oswald, Martha Duerksen, 86, Glendale, Ariz., died April 2 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: C. Evan Oswald. Parents: John R. and Susanna Quiring Duerksen. Child: Sylvia Oswald Beneze; two grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Glencroft Retirement Community Auditorium, Glendale.

Pauls, Irvin A. "Irv", 80, Buhler, Kan., died June 13. Spouse: Louise Pauls. Children: Gaylene Van Horn, Shirley Grubbs; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 16 in Buhler.

Pugh, Michael Thomas, 46, Ephrata, Pa., died June 2 of cancer. Spouse: Cindy Pugh. Parents: Arthur and Martha Pugh. Children: Amber Corey, Tara, Timothy; two grandchildren. Funeral: June 9 at Reformed Presbyterian Church, Ephrata.

Rice, Mary Eva Riegsecker, 89, Goshen, Ind., died June 16. Spouse: Harry C. Rice. Parents: John and Neomah Miller Riegsecker. Children: Dorothy Schmidt, Norma Gertzman, Gene, Dennis; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 20 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Sprunger, Max T., 85, Goshen, Ind., died June 26. Spouse: Virginia Schwartz Sprunger (deceased). Parents: Martin and Linda Luginbill Sprunger. Children: Lewis W., Joseph A., Jonathan W., Ann M., Edmund L.; eight grandchildren. Funeral: June 29 at Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Stutzman, Velma Martin, 94, Milford, Neb., died June 9. Spouse: Lester Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Peter and Margaret Martin. Children: Richard, Dorothy; 10 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 12 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Witmer, Henry (Hank), 84, Leo, Ind., died June 14. Spouse: Edna Mae Gerig Witmer (deceased). Parents: Menno and Lydia S. Delagrange Witmer. Children: S. Cliff, Cletus U., Clarence L.; five grandchildren; one great grandchild. Funeral: June 18 at North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo-Cedarville, Ind.

Yoder, Ruth Elizabeth, 82, Phoenix, Ariz., died June 9. Parents: John M. and Nancy Guengerich Yoder. Funeral: June 15 at Glencroft Retirement Center, Glendale, Ariz.

President and CEO

Mennonite Mutual Aid's Board of Directors is seeking a President and Chief Executive Officer to lead a multi-line organization that provides insurance, financial services, charitable giving, and fraternal benefits. The leader will forward an MMA vision which springs from a rich Anabaptist tradition of holistic stewardship lifestyles dedicated to honoring God with individual and community gifts rooted in the biblical conviction, "the earth is the Lord's."

In service since 1945, MMA's vision holds faith at the center, integrating all of life's choices with one's faith commitments. An experienced leader is sought who will steward the resources of the organization toward strategies which serve a growing number of Anabaptists, providing a comprehensive set of tools for managing their gifts in ways that honor God, and caring for needs of the world and the individual.

Qualified candidates must possess proven leadership skills, high ethical standards, visionary thinking, balanced risk-taking and creativity, ability to advance and guide team collaboration, and exceptional skills to communicate MMA's distinctive stewardship values and services. Candidates will bring personal stewardship experience and involvement in an Anabaptist denomination and congregation.

See Careers at MMA-online.org for more information.

Cover letter and resume may be e-mailed or sent to:
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MMA Board Presidential Succession Committee Chair
1919 Park Rd., Harrisonburg, VA 22802
pswartzen@aol.com.

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Goshen College is seeking a part-time ***daytime circulation supervisor*** for the Good Library. For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2006.

Athletic director to administrate, manage and develop overall vision for athletic programs: cross country, volleyball, soccer, basketball, softball and baseball. Mentor coaches and educate students, parents and staff in a Christian philosophy of sports. Organize scheduling and communication within the Tri-River league.

Contact Mike Wenger at mwenger@westernmennoniteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

High School English teacher with an Anabaptist faith perspective to lead respective departments.

Contact Darrel Camp at dcamp@westernmennoniteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students locally and from various states and countries. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a full-time ***administrative and communications assistant***. This person will provide administrative assistance to the associate dean for leadership education and communications assistance to the director of communications. Qualifications include an undergraduate degree, abilities to organize tasks and manage details, experience or training in print communication, and knowledge of office software and equipment. To apply, send a letter indicating interest, a resume and three professional references to Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or jglongenecker@ambs.edu.

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Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for a ***director of development***. This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. The successful candidate will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment and be available to begin employment between August 2006 and July 2007.

Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net.

Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

Eastern Mennonite School is seeking a part-time ***U.S. history teacher*** for the 2006-07 school year.

Please express your interest to Paul G. Leaman, principal, if you share the call for Christ-centered education in an academic environment. Email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502. EMHS is an equal opportunity employer.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership seeks ***director of intercultural relations.***

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is seeking a full- or part-time director of intercultural relations to serve as an advocate for racial/ethnic people in all parts of Mennonite Church USA and work for equitable access to churchwide resources for racial/ethnic people and their inclusion in Mennonite Church USA training opportunities and leadership positions.

In this role, the director will regularly audit the churchwide system for the inclusion of racial/ethnic leaders and resources and provide a network for conversation among racial/ethnic groups. The intercultural relations director will provide counsel to churchwide agencies and related groups about racial/ethnic people who are able to serve in board and staff roles. The intercultural relations director will work with other Executive Leadership staff to help the Executive Board lead Mennonite Church USA in becoming an antiracist church.

Resumés should be sent to Ron Byler, 500 S. Main St., P.O. Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515.

***Associate pastor of youth and worship*: Oak Grove Mennonite Church**, a growing, vibrant church of approximately 275 attendees in rural West Liberty, Ohio, is seeking a full-time associate pastor. Primary responsibilities will be to pastor the youth and assist the congregation in providing creative and meaningful worship experiences. Please contact Search Committee Chairman Larry Steider at lsteider@earthlink.net or 937-465-3183.

Spruce Lake Retreat is hosting a ***Women's retreat*** Sept. 15-17, featuring Linda Evans Shepherd, speaker, humorist, author and radio host of Right to the Heart. For the support, encouragement and community with other women you need and deserve, call 800-822-7505 for reservations. (Early registration discount by Aug.16.) Located in the Pocono Mts. of northeastern Pa. (www.sprucelake.org).

Storyteller and MCC advocate Peter J. Dyck will be featured at **Spruce Lake Retreat's** fall ***Seniors' Retreat*** Sept. 11-13, along with "music missionary" Beth Williams. For natural beauty of the Pocono Mts. and the spiritual riches of story, worship and fellowship, call 800-822-7505 for reservations (www.sprucelake.org).

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following position for the 2006-07 school year: ***mathematics instructor***. Send resumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Kristene Miller, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

A critical film for a critical time

Gordon Houser

I'm going to do something I've never done in my years of writing about films—urge everyone to see a film. Showing in some theaters but eventually coming to DVD, *An Inconvenient Truth* is a must-see documentary.

Some films have artistic merit; others affect us emotionally, draw us into another world and other lives; some merely seek to entertain. This one is different. While it has its artistic merits, may affect us emotionally and even has elements that entertain, it needs to be seen because its message is so critical to our lives.

In the film, Al Gore (yes, that Al Gore, who introduces himself by saying, "I used to be the next president of the United States.") takes his audience through the science of global warming. Since he lost the presidential election in 2000, he has been presenting this information to people around the world.

He uses charts, graphs, video, cartoons and humor (yes, humor) to help us understand what causes global warming and what effects it is having on our planet. He addresses about every objection that's been raised to the idea that humans are primarily responsible for this crisis.

For example, he points out that in the last decade 938 peer-reviewed scientific articles have been published about global warming. Of these, none has disagreed with the consensus that global warming is real and is caused primarily by human activity. Meanwhile, he says, 53 percent of articles in the popular press have stated that there is not a consensus on global warming.

Among the facts he presents are these:

- The number of Category 4 and 5 hurricanes has almost doubled in the last 30 years.
- Malaria has spread to higher altitudes in places like the Colombian Andes, 7,000 feet above sea level.
- The flow of ice from glaciers in Greenland has more than doubled over the past decade.
- At least 279 species of plants and animals are already responding to global warming, moving closer to the poles.

And he warns that if the warming continues, we can expect catastrophic consequences:

- Deaths from global warming will double in just 25 years—to 300,000 people a year.
- Global sea levels could rise by more than 20 feet with the loss of shelf ice in Greenland and Antarctica, devastating coastal areas worldwide.
- Heat waves will be more frequent and intense.
- Droughts and wildfires will occur more often.
- The Arctic Ocean could be ice free in summer by 2050.
- More than a million species worldwide could be driven to extinction by 2050.

Many of us talk about global warming without having a good understanding of what it is. And many people have questions, such as, If it's global warming, why is there flooding in some areas and drought in others? Gore answers such questions and helps us understand this phenomenon.

The film has its flaws. The director, Davis Guggenheim, intersperses footage of Gore visiting his father's farm and reflecting on his son's near death from being hit by a car and his sister's death from lung cancer, among other things. These provide a personal touch, yet some verge on emotional manipulation. For the most part, he sticks to presenting facts, and this has the greatest impact.

While global warming has been one more issue reflecting the polarized political views in our nation, Gore makes clear that this is not a political issue but a moral issue. Actually it is political in the sense that what's perhaps needed most to overcome global warming is political will.

Too many "principalities and powers" (the oil industry is one) have chosen short-term profits over the survival of our children and grandchildren on this planet.

Gore does not draw on religion, but let me. Except for those who see the Earth as a garment to be discarded upon Christ's return—and I would call them more gnostic than Christian—Christians believe God created the Earth. John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world" ("kosmos" in Greek, which refers to the created world, not just humanity). Mistreating God's creation is an offense to God, who loves it. Our helping heal our planet is not just about survival; it's about loving God.

Gore offers hope. We can take simple actions to help counter global warming. For some ideas go to www.climatecrisis.net.

An Inconvenient Truth is rated PG for "mild thematic elements." Children should see it and talk to adults about working to make our planet livable in their lifetimes.

This is a critical film for a critical time.

BOOKS

Creation Set Free: The Spirit as Liberator of Nature by Sigurd Bergmann (Eerdmans, 2005, $38) shows that we have much to learn from early church leaders, in this case Gregory of Nazianzus, who lived in the fourth century. Given the destruction of the environment, ecology is a critical issue. Bergmann invites readers to link liberation theology with ecological theology that "can expect great things if it will but rediscover how to speak about the Holy Spirit." He argues that "because the triune God is always at work in the Holy Spirit, God always creates and perfects the nature of his creation in the Spirit." This book can be heavy going, but it opens new ways to understand the work of the Spirit in creation.

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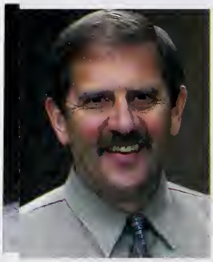


Everett J. Thomas

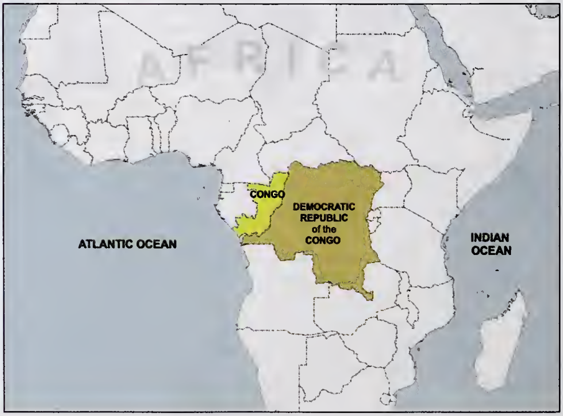
Correction: The book *American Sphinx*, mentioned in the July 4 editorial, was written by Joseph J. Ellis.

Mennonite Church USA is about to launch a relationship with Mennonites in another country. The experience will be difficult; the odds of this relationship succeeding are not good. Those may be the best reasons for trying.

Through the auspices of Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Church USA is establishing a "church-to-church" relationship with two of the three groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Communauté Mennonite au Congo (Congo Mennonite Community) and Communauté Evangélique Mennonite (Evangelical Mennonite Community).

One purpose for such church-to-church relationships is to change the dynamics between members of the global Mennonite community. Churches in many other countries are the fruits of our mission efforts over the past century. But many are now ready to move away from their relationships with mission agencies and relate directly to North American church as equals.

However, our differences are monumental. First, French is the official language in the Congo. Few Mennonite Church USA leaders are fluent in French, so the conversation will require interpreters at many steps along the way if it is to get very deep. We will find out how well that works when a delegation from Mennonite Church USA visits the Congo in February 2007.



Second, the country in which these Mennonite sisters and brothers live is in chaos. It will be a daunting task for Mennonite Church USA leaders to establish a relationship with church leaders who, for example, cannot even communicate with each other easily.

At Mennonite Central Committee's recent annual meeting (see June 20), Melody Rupley, MCC's co-director for Africa, described the situation in the Congo and explained why MCC is reducing its presence there.

"Congo has gotten further and further into a political morass that makes it increasingly difficult to work," Rupley said. "Ninety to 95 percent of the Congolese economy is a parallel [cashless] market. The way society keeps functioning is that everyone finds ways to keep going. In any organization there is a 'facilitation fee' that is not part of anybody's budget. The Congolese are endlessly innovative to make things work."

This context has made it difficult to place staff in the Congo; MCC has had no co-director in the Congo for five years. But this failure to find leadership is also a puzzlement; according to Rupley there are hundreds of MCC alumni who served in Congo, and at one time there were 80 MCCers in the Teachers Abroad Program there.

Because the country is in turmoil, it is difficult for Congolese leaders to meet together to figure out how to be the church in their setting. Toward that end, MCC and Mennonite World Conference are sponsoring a Congo Forum that provides Congolese leaders the time and space they need to figure out their identity and decide how they should relate to other Mennonite groups—such as Mennonite Church USA.

While we enter this relationship with best intentions, what it will mean is anybody's guess. The relationship will not develop along a straight and comfortable line. But the experience can help us learn from some of our sisters and brothers in the global South. It will also create a significant new bond between two very different groups within the international faith community.—*ejt*

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Where do you stand on repentance?

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
—Matthew 4:17 (KJV)

Elaine Bryant is missional minister at Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

The above verse came to mind, as I read a note called "Kingdom Dynamics" associated with Genesis 1:1 in the Spirit Filled Life edition of the New King James Version of the Bible. Another note, "Our Call," related to reconciliation was associated with the words in Matthew.

The opening sentence of the "Kingdom Dynamics" note reads as follows: "Our first assignment in the ministry of reconciliation is to answer God's call for repentance regarding our own separatism." "Separatism" didn't seem applicable to me, as a young-old female descendant of African slaves in America who by God's grace has lived through de jure and de facto racism in and outside the church of Jesus Christ. I took the word "repent" to heart for myself and the portion of Christ's church with which I have been blessed and privileged to work for the last 19 years.

It seemed that I, along with other members of the church, was being directed to repent, rethink or think again about reconciliation. The rethinking began with a "Kingdom Dynamic" entry associated with 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, which discusses repentance in connection with reconciliation. That entry reads as follows:

"Repentance is an essential turning point in reconciled relationships; it requires ownership of our responsibility for whatever part we may have played in erecting or reinforcing barriers. Repentance not only accepts responsibility for the part that we have played in the wall building but also for the turning away from the behavior that built the walls in the first place. Often we may not even perceive how we may unintentionally contribute to divisions between people individually or even between ethnic groups in general, especially through ethnic discrimination or religious sectarianism [or pride-filled, self-righteous remarks or attitudes about the greater spirituality in, or correctness of, our worship style].

"Perhaps we have not done anything personally to hurt others, but still we may have sinned by our inaction (James 4:17). For the body of Christ to come to health, repentance—regret, confession, and action—is needed. As we do repent, the walls built through blindness and separatism [as well as arrogance, bitterness, callousness, and disregard for the New Commandment] will be brought down, and Christ will be honored through reconciled relationships."

I added the bracketed sections in the quotation because of my culpability on some of the points mentioned. In addition I have heard such comments and observed such attitudes from representatives of almost every ethnic group with which I have interacted over nearly 50 years in various parts of the Lord's church. Since the Lord said—according to Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42 (KJV)—that the Pharisees "ought to have done justice, mercy, faith … and love," it seems reasonable to believe that he expects us to do the same.

Repentance is not just about our sins. It is also a call to think again about what is meant when we talk about the kingdom of heaven. Since we talk about wanting to be a sign of that kingdom, it seems reasonable to study what is meant by it. It may be good for others of us to rethink and know what other members of the Lord's church think and where we stand in regard to repentance and talk about the kingdom.

I say we could benefit from sharing thoughts in response to "Kingdom Dynamics" entries on the foundations, terminology, message, character, ministry, conflict, worship and prophecy of the kingdom. What say you?

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 15, August 1, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526

Mennonite
Church
USA

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Cover illustration: Dee Birkey using iStockphoto

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Pen mightier than sword

I agree with Jim Bishop in his article about Robert Baker ("His Pen Was Mightier than the Sword," June 20). Baker and other prolific Mennonite writers did much to influence our lives through our Mennonite publications. As I view the demise of *Story Friends*, *On the Line* and the earlier *Christian Living*, I wonder where Mennonite writers will find an outlet for their messages. Where will Mennonites and readers of different interest levels read about our beliefs?

I started submitting manuscripts to Mennonite Publishing House publications 50 years ago. The untiring efforts of the editors made my work acceptable for publication. Robert Baker and other writers also gave me much encouragement. I pray that Mennonite Publishing Network will continue to provide opportunities and help writers whose words will be "mightier than the sword."—*Martha Kauffman C. Weaver, Atglen, Pa.*

Honest about 'hidden stuff'

I applaud the gentleman referred to in "A Shadow Illness" (June 6) who had the courage to share the truth with his congregation about experiencing depression. Yes, depression loves silence. Because of the fear, stigma and shame associated with mental illness, we tend not to talk about it. If more of us are willing to be honest and open about our "hidden stuff," whether it be anxiety attacks, food addiction or depression, the barriers of isolation and stigma can be overcome. The courage to be our true, authentic selves brings freedom that will foster hope and healing within and from others … and perhaps covered dishes will become as common for people with mental illnesses as physical illnesses.—*Ruth Detweiler, Akron, Pa.*

Reject scare tactics

Re the June 20 editorial "Bird Flu": Denying the possibility of a pandemic of avian bird flu (H5N1) is careless. However, the other extreme is equally rash. The editorial did bring up some good points, but there was an underlying tone of doom and gloom. While retaining elements of truth, most of the editorial read like a script from Hollywood. This Chicken Little "The Sky is Falling" connotation is not only meant to inform but to frighten and scare one into action.

Let's take a (virus-free) breath and a step back. Taking six months to develop a vaccine, as Thomas said, is misleading. Vaccine development is already occurring against the H5N1 virus. While these vaccines may not be optimal for mass distribution, it does not negate the fact that vaccine development is occurring. The World Health Organization is also pursuing pandemic planning strategies. Medicines are being stockpiled (especially antivirals such as oseltamivir, which has shown some effect against H5N1).

Thomas raised a valid point: that resources will be stored in developed countries, where vaccines and medications are owned and manufactured, resulting in a tragic effect on poorer countries. The wider church has a chance to show its true colors by calling on governments to ensure equal distribution of medicines and supplies. But good stewardship demands that we look at all angles with all the information before shelling out dollars and storing food and water (dollars that could help developing countries or be used elsewhere).

I agree that H5N1 is a threat to the world. Some action is warranted. I just disagree with using scare tactics to prompt that action.—*Trent Hummel, Cincinnati*

I was interested to see the June 20 editorial promoting "bird flu" as the topic that deserves our urgent attention ("congregations can talk about what to do if mass panic sets neighbor against neighbor"). Without minimizing public health issues, that's a little too much deference to the scare tactics of the current U.S. administration for my taste.

Here are some criteria I propose for how we as a church choose our battles, drawn from the witness of our forebears:

• Keeping a disciplined church. Why are there eight drug traffickers of Mennonite origin in one Texas federal prison alone?

• Speaking up for heretics imprisoned for their views or associations: My client, pacifist Ernst Zundel, faces five years of prison in Germany simply for expressing his historical opinions.

IN THIS ISSUE

A growing number of Mennonites are talking with Roman Catholics, although some voters in our recent Web site poll do not think it a particularly good idea (see page 5). Our cover story addresses this growing dialogue. Katherine Donnelly describes "common misunderstandings among Mennonites about Catholics, particularly in the areas of ritual and the use of the sensory in worship" (page 8). Associate editor Gordon Houser editorializes about this expanding dialogue and Bridgefolk, one group that is encouraging it (page 32). He passes along the idea that such misunderstandings are invasive plants in the garden and says, "Let us not be sidetracked by fighting weeds." In the news section, *Canadian Mennonite* editor Tim Miller Dyck reports on Mennonite Church Canada's recent delegate assembly and their decision to let some churches avoid membership in their national body.—*Editor*

- Holding religious elites accountable. Every day an untouchable Israel feeds off a rabbinic theology of divine entitlement and anti-Gentile supremacy to marginalize and kill its neighbors.
- Giving voice to the least of these. Our U.S. media serve only the interest of the powerful, and our politicians are bought and paid for by the same interests. These shills are easily persuaded to cede civil liberties to perceived security interests.

The foregoing criteria hit close to our historical-theological home and are not as likely to draw mainstream champions as some other topics. The church is overdue for some dialogue on how it sets its agenda.—*Bruce Leichty, Clovis, Calif.*

Canadians know more about U.S.

I got a chuckle from the letter by Carl Smeltzer (Readers Say, June 20). Around the time it was printed, I was in Kansas for meetings with Mennonite editors from Canada and the United States. Someone asked if there really were differences between Americans and Canadians. One of the differences cited was the fact that most (not all) Canadians know more about the United States than most Americans do about Canada. So when I saw Smeltzer's letter lumping "the premiers of Canada" with "the presidents of the United States," I thought of our discussion.

While Canada does indeed have premiers, they are equivalent to U.S. state governors. As such, they have limited powers to wreak the same level of havoc on an international scale as some of the national leaders (despots) named by Smeltzer. Our national elected leader is our prime minister. At this point Stephen Harper is our prime minister. He just returned from his first official state visit to Washington to meet with President Bush. The meeting apparently went well. Our newspapers indicated the two are already on a first-name basis—George and Steve (Canadians have always referred to him more formally as Stephen). Harper's views on many issues, including the war on terror, are more in line with America's than were the views of his Liberal predecessors (Prime Ministers Paul Martin and Jean Chretien).—*Ross W. Muir, Kitchener, Ont.*

Presidents were Christian

I read with interest Everett J. Thomas' July 4 editorial "Christian Revolutionaries?" I have only checked out the comments on John Adams. As I read an excerpt on John Adams, he writes, "As his family and friends knew, Adams was both a devout Christian and an independent thinker, and he saw no conflict in that."

In the editorial, Thomas inferred that the first presidents, including Adams, were not Christian. Also in another article I read about John Adams, it states that he was totally against going to war but literally was forced into it. I have read various articles on Jefferson and Washington, and they were not perfect—neither am I. However, both of them seemed to respect God and prayed. They also referred to God and morality in various statements they made.—*Charlie Habegger, Berne, Ind.*

Two-kingdom theology

Gerlof Homan's letter to the editor (July 4) was mistaken when it attributed to me the position "that Mennonites should not criticize the government when it wages war" in self-defense. In my May 16 letter to the editor, I was trying to describe briefly but accurately the traditional Anabaptist-Mennonite position. My own position is more nuanced than the strict two-kingdom theology of the early Anabaptists: I will witness to our government to avoid war whenever possible, and I will protest when it abuses its power. But unlike my expectations for Christians and the church, I do not expect the national government to be pacifist and do not see how it can be. Maybe Christ's Spirit will transform even states to be nonviolent, but this will not happen because of our protests and political action.—*Ryan Ahlgrim, Indianapolis*

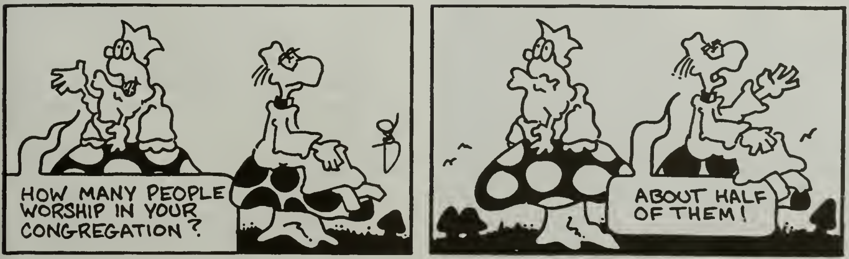
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

It is important for Mennonites and Catholics to learn from each other: (184 votes):

○ Yes (45%)
○ No (51%)
○ Not sure (5%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


HOW MANY PEOPLE WORSHIP IN YOUR CONGREGATION?
ABOUT HALF OF THEM!

IN BRIEF

Blame foreigners, not the rich

American productivity increased by over 30 percent during the past decade, but it is people at the top of the economic ladder who have profited from this growth, says the *Economist* (June 17). If one charts Americans according to a 10-rung ladder, the gap between the ninth and the first rungs has increased by a third since 1980. In that same time, the aggregate income of the wealthiest 1 percent has doubled, from 8 to 16 percent. Still, rather than blaming their rich compatriots, Americans tend to blame foreigners for their economic situation—people getting the jobs shipped overseas and immigrants who come to this country willing to work for less money.—*The Christian Century*

MDS announces new RV Program

Mennonite Disaster Service is beginning a special program for retired or semiretired couples and singles who own or have access to a self-contained recreational vehicle (RV). The RV Program will be operated as an independent MDS project. It will be based somewhere in the Gulf Coast region in a location to be announced soon. For more details on the program, contact Don and Marilyn Buller at 717-823-0692, fax 866-819-4167 or visit mds.mennonite.net/Projects/RVProgram. —*MDS*

MCC begins Lebanese response efforts

WINNIPEG—Thousands of Lebanese are fleeing Southern Beirut and Southern Lebanon to find safety in other parts of the city and country, says Rick Janzen, director of Mennonite Central Committee's Middle East programs.

MCC is responding as it can by providing funds for food, water, medical supplies and emergency shelter for some of these displaced people. MCC is working in partnership with three local Lebanese organizations to provide this assistance.

Lebanese civilians are bearing the brunt of the brutal conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, says Janzen, who returned to Winnipeg on July 18 from a visit to the Middle East.

A city park situated close to the MCC office in West Beirut has become a makeshift refugee camp. "I've been told it's full of people—it looks like a campground," he says. Damage to roads and bridges, along with ongoing safety and security concerns, creates enormous logistical challenges for groups providing emergency aid, says Janzen.

Bassam Chamoun, a Lebanese citizen who has worked in the MCC office since 1985, is coordinating MCC's relief efforts.—*MCC*

National coordinator for Assembly 15 named

STRASBOURG, France—Ernst Weichselberger, Asunción, Paraguay, has accepted the invitation of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) to be the national coordinator for Assembly 15, beginning Aug. 1. The global assembly will be held in Asunción July 13-19, 2009.

The national coordinator will oversee and direct in-country planning, including the work of numerous committees, communication and publicity within Paraguay, and risk management. He is accountable to Ray Brubacher, international coordinator for MWC, and will report to the chair and executive committee of the National Coordinating Council, made up of representatives from the eight hosting conferences in Paraguay.

Weichselberger is the son of an Austrian Catholic pacifist who migrated in the 1930s to Paraguay, where he met and later married a Mennonite woman who, in 1929 at age 16, had fled from Russia with her family. He is a member of the Vereinigung der Mennonitengemeinden von Paraguay (General Conference).

Trained as a teacher, Weichselberger spent seven years teaching and in youth work, then 17 years directing Mennonite Voluntary Service and peace issues within all the German Mennonite conferences in Paraguay.

In 1975, the Mennonites appointed him to serve with Trans World Radio Communications in Paraguay.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Jim Bishop

Spiritual formation at summer institute

Keaton Shenk (third from left), Harrisonburg, Va., reads Scripture during afternoon prayers, part of the rhythm at Eastern Mennonite Seminary's Summer Institute for Spiritual Formation in Harrisonburg, Va. Students Tom Bowman (left), Charlottesville, Va., and Bill Huffman, Stuarts Draft, Va., and instructor Kevin Clark pray during the reading. SISF is a three-year program to train spiritual directors and others interested in the ministry of spiritual formation.—*Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

MCC helps Palestinian families in Gaza

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing $26,000 to a Palestinian women's organization to help families and children cope with the trauma of Israeli attacks in Gaza.

Beginning June 28, Israeli attacks on Palestinian targets, including public utilities, have cut electricity and water supplies in much of Gaza. Local residents are traumatized by gunfire, bombing and the sonic booms of fighter jets.

Culture and Free Thought Association, a women's organization in Gaza's Khan Younis refugee camp, operates community centers for children, teenagers, women and cultural events. The association is using MCC's grant to hire five trauma counselors and to purchase a generator and fuel to provide electricity at the community centers.

The counselors will work with a volunteer drama team from Culture and Free Thought Association to help children deal with trauma creatively by writing and performing skits about their experiences.—*MCC*

Mennonite physicians, nurses meet in Iowa

IOWA CITY, Iowa—The Mennonite Medical Association and Mennonite Nurses Association met June 22-25 in Iowa City. The theme for their

Dale D. Gehman

ersville is "Floyd Zone"
small village of Farmersville, Pa., seven miles north of aster, is now known as the "Floyd Zone" after former nonite Floyd Landis won the 2006 Tour de France bicycle Landis' parents are members of the Martindale Mennonite ch in Ephrata, a 370-member congregation that is part of aster Mennonite Conference.

annual conference was "Taking Christ … into the Fields."

Dr. Roger Gingrich of the University of Iowa was keynote speaker. An oncologist, he said that viewing the patient as a holistic being is one of the values of Anabaptist faith.

Dr. Carol Farran, a nurse researcher at Rush University in Chicago, offered a glimpse into care of Alzheimer's patients. She updated attendees on current research related to Alzheimer's disease, its potential etiology and the importance of the family caregiver's role.

Other sessions included presentations from Mennonite Disaster Service and Mennonite Central Committee and workshops on palliative care in Lutheran hospitals across Tanzania, physician and nurses utilizing an integrated care model and an update on the health-care access initiative of Mennonite Church USA.—*Mennonite Medical Association*

Canadians call for end to secret trials

EDMONTON, Alta.—Mennonite Church Canada Assembly delegates and Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Canada members and supporters delivered a petition of 80 signatures July 6 to the office of Member of Parliament (MP) Rahim Jaffer. The petition called for an end to secret trials in Canada and release or charge of those currently held under "security certificates."

The government of Canada, using a secret trial security certificate under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, can declare any refugee or permanent resident inadmissible to Canada, have them arrested, and held without charge or bail indefinitely. It can also refuse to allow either that person or their lawyer to see the evidence against them. Currently, Canada is detaining five Muslim men on security certificates, who have served between three and six years without charge.

Former CPT hostage James Loney advocated for the detainees in an open letter to MPs delivered last month during Supreme Court of Canada hearings on the constitutionality of security certificates legislation. "Insofar as these five men have not been charged, they are subject to an unjust deprivation of freedom, just as I was," he wrote.—*CPT*

Bluffton shows record enrollment for 2005-06

BLUFFTON, Ohio—The fiscal year that ended June 30 proved successful for Bluffton University as the institution experienced record enrollment, consistent financial support and national accreditation of its teacher education programs, as well as several new grants for academic programs.

For the first time in the school's 106-year history, enrollment broke the 1,200 mark. The total enrollment of 1,211 students is an increase of 20 students from the previous year. A record number of 132 graduate students were included in the total, an increase of 44 from 2004-05.—*Bluffton University*

MMA assesses Medicare Advantage plans

GOSHEN, Ind.—MMA has found that many seniors purchasing Medicare Advantage plans may be receiving lesser benefits than they thought. MMA's recent assessment of a prominent Medicare Advantage private fee-for-service plan showed that the coverage in some plans is essentially the same as Medicare alone—without a Medicare supplement plan—due to the addition of copays, deductibles and coinsurance for almost all services.

The assessment was conducted due to increased questions from MMA members regarding Medicare Advantage plans.

Medicare Advantage plans are offered through private insurers and are typically sold with a low or no premium. But what many seniors don't realize is that these plans shift the cost of services typically paid by a Medicare supplement plan to the individual—resulting in higher out-of-pocket expenses.

Seniors interested in Medicare Advantage plans should also consider the plan's stability. Medicare Advantage insurers receive funding from Medicare. If this government funding decreases, insurers could reduce benefits, increase premiums or discontinue the plans.—*MMA*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

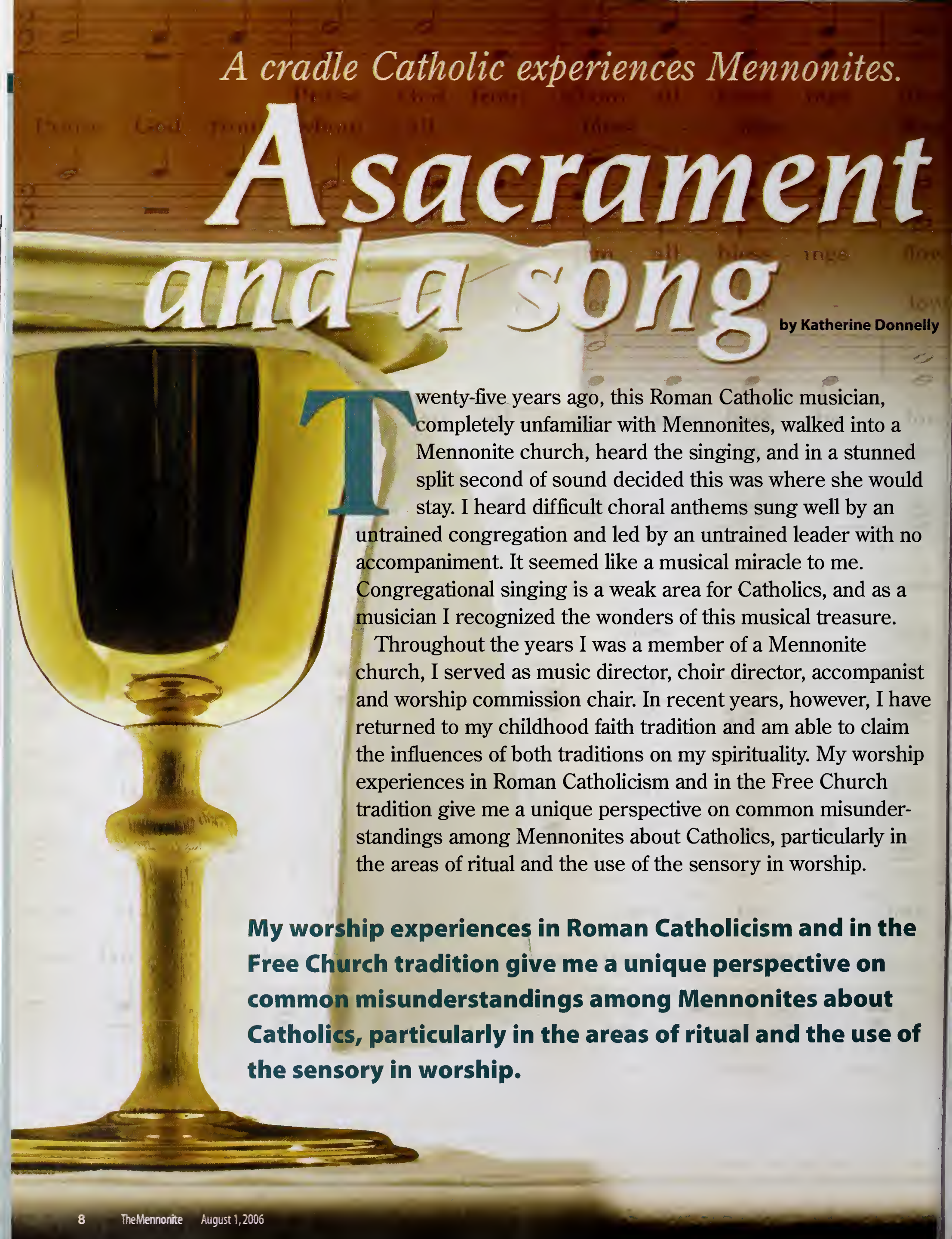
IN BRIEF

Nelson Kraybill reappointed to a fourth term

J. Nelson Kraybill has been reappointed to a fourth term as president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in an action by the AMBS board of directors and affirmed by the Mennonite Education Agency board and the Christian Formation Council of Mennonite Church Canada. The reappointment to a new four-year term, which begins July 1, 2007, came upon the recommendation of a committee that conducted an extensive review of students, faculty, denominational leaders, alumni, peer leaders and educational agencies of the church. Kraybill has served as president of AMBS since 1997.—*AMBS*

Lock 'em up

The estimated number of children currently serving life-without-parole sentences, according to Human Rights Watch, is 2,225 in the United States, and 12 in the rest of the world. This practice is forbidden by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by every country in the world except the United States and Somalia.
—Sojourners



A cradle Catholic experiences Mennonites.

A sacrament and a song

by Katherine Donnelly

Twenty-five years ago, this Roman Catholic musician, completely unfamiliar with Mennonites, walked into a Mennonite church, heard the singing, and in a stunned split second of sound decided this was where she would stay. I heard difficult choral anthems sung well by an untrained congregation and led by an untrained leader with no accompaniment. It seemed like a musical miracle to me. Congregational singing is a weak area for Catholics, and as a musician I recognized the wonders of this musical treasure.

Throughout the years I was a member of a Mennonite church, I served as music director, choir director, accompanist and worship commission chair. In recent years, however, I have returned to my childhood faith tradition and am able to claim the influences of both traditions on my spirituality. My worship experiences in Roman Catholicism and in the Free Church tradition give me a unique perspective on common misunderstandings among Mennonites about Catholics, particularly in the areas of ritual and the use of the sensory in worship.

My worship experiences in Roman Catholicism and in the Free Church tradition give me a unique perspective on common misunderstandings among Mennonites about Catholics, particularly in the areas of ritual and the use of the sensory in worship.

The Catholic liturgy of the Eucharist is a different sort of ritual, but it is layered with meaning, and appreciation of it grows with experience.

I was born and raised Roman Catholic, while my husband grew up in a small, rural Wesleyan church. When our oldest was a baby, we moved to the Shenandoah Valley and looked for a church home. Attending church as a family was important to me. I knew I could make the leap to a non-Catholic tradition more easily than my husband could embrace Catholicism. When we discovered the local Mennonite church, we found incredible music, close friends and a nurturing place for our three children. So we stayed, eventually becoming members and raising our children as Mennonites. When asked about our family's faith background, my husband would laugh, "My wife's Catholic, I'm Protestant, and our kids are mixed-up little Mennonites."

Roots: Some years ago, when the children were in high school and college, I went through a period of personal crisis. At the same time I was hearing many fine sermons on Anabaptist roots. It occurred to me that I had my own roots and needed them to sustain me. During this time I attended the weekday liturgy, or worship service, at the local Catholic community. I felt the need to make an official return to my childhood faith tradition. With the kids almost grown and the blessing of my family, I withdrew my Mennonite membership and rejoined the Catholic faith. I saw this not as a rejection of Mennonites but as a way to put back inside me something important I had given up.

Now I only worship with the Catholics occasionally and most Sundays attend my Mennonite community. Although I consider myself officially Roman Catholic, I also see myself as an adopted Mennonite sister. I am fortunate to draw from two streams of religious heritage, finding advantages to being a person of hybrid faith. My cross-cultural faith experience has given me a broader base from which to understand varied faith traditions.

Ritual: Over the years that I have worshiped with Mennonites, I have discovered two important areas of misunderstanding about Catholic worship. The first is ritual. The Roman Catholic worship service, in earlier years known as the Mass, is now called the liturgy of the Eucharist. Eucharist is a more formal term for Communion. Sometimes I've heard the liturgy of the Eucharist referred to as "dry ritual" and therefore inferior to the Free Church style of worship. Webster's dictionary defines ritual as "the observance of set forms or rites, as in public worship." Zion Mennonite Church near Broadway, Va., has a ritual, but we don't use that terminology when speaking of our services. On most Sundays worshipers can expect hymns, prayers, sharing, an offering and a sermon. That's a "set form in public worship."

The Catholic liturgy of the Eucharist is a different sort of ritual, but it is layered with meaning, and appreciation of it grows with experience. For Catholics, the liturgy is an ancient ritual that forms the core of their worship experience. The liturgy flows from the joyful processional hymn, to the penitential "Lord, have mercy" to the jubilant "Glory to God in the highest." The worshipers then hear substantial portions of Scripture read every Sunday, since all the lectionary readings are included in full—Old Testament, a sung Psalm, New Testament and the Gospel. The Gospel reading is considered so important that worshipers stand during its reading. A 15-minute homily is followed by the recitation of the Nicene Creed, the offertory, the magnificent "Holy, holy, holy," the Lord's Prayer, the reflective "Lamb of God" and the reception of the Eucharist. Following a brief silent period after Communion, the liturgy ends with a joyful recessional hymn. All this usually fits into one hour. The parts of the liturgy, along with other responses, are often sung. The reception of the Eucharist is the primary act of worship and is so important as to be part of every service, including weddings and funerals.

The liturgy of the Eucharist as a worship form has a natural feeling to its flow, rising and falling until it peaks at Communion. Worshipers are so familiar with the text and tunes of the liturgy that they are able to participate from memory. The participants use hymnals only for the four variable hymns—processional, offertory, Communion and recessional. As with any church, worship can be done well or be poorly planned and executed. When the liturgy of the Eucharist is carried out by a committed faith community, it can be profoundly worshipful. The flow, richness and depth are unlike any other experience.

Continued on page 10

The sacramental approach to Roman Catholic worship and the strength of Mennonite song do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Continued from page 9

Symbol and the sensory: A second area of Catholicism that is misunderstood by Mennonites is the role of symbol and the use of the sensory in Roman Catholic worship. Catholic worship is sacramental, that is, it uses outward signs to convey inner realities. Things that are important aids to worship in the Roman Catholic tradition are candles, crucifixes, rosaries, stained glass, special garments for the priest, holy water, statues of holy people and incense. These things, along with the Eucharist, involve our senses of touch, sight, smell and taste. Catholics don't worship these things; we worship through these things. This allows us to experience the presence of the holy in ways other than the spoken or sung word.

The rosary—not part of the Mass and most often a private form of devotion—is a mysterious and misunderstood form of prayer to Mennonites. These traditional Catholic prayer beads are similar to the prayer beads that have been used in other traditions since ancient times. The rosary is a form of contemplative prayer or meditation. Involving the sense of touch through the fingers, the user repeats set prayers. The prayers are the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, the "Hail, Mary" and the "Glory be to the Father." The mind is then free to meditate on a set pattern of events from the life of Jesus, including the birth events, his life, crucifixion and resurrection. Devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus, is an important feature of the rosary, but at deeper levels the devotee enters into the Gospel stories.

morgueFile.com

Another seemingly mysterious symbol to Mennonites is the crucifix—the cross depicting the crucified body of Jesus. The crucifix does not deny the resurrection but serves as a reminder of the place of suffering in the Christian life.

Gesture and movement, relating to the sensory, form an important part of Catholic worship. The believer signs himself or herself "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Traditional Catholic liturgy incorporated standing, sitting and kneeling at various times during the service as well as the sign of the cross and genuflecting upon entering and exiting the pew. Such posture changes enhance the worship experience by incorporating the whole person.

Mutual understanding: There are important theological differences between Mennonites and Catholics in these areas. However, I find that developing mutual understanding and respect enhances personal and communal faith. The sacramental approach to Roman Catholic worship and the strength of Mennonite song do not have to be mutually exclusive. Broadening our spiritual horizons through interdenominational worship experiences does not weaken our own roots. Rather, these experiences help us appreciate our own heritage while at the same time giving us much-needed openness, flexibility and depth in our faith.

I had a senior friend at church some time ago, Elizabeth A. Showalter. Great-aunt to dozens of nieces and nephews, Elizabeth went blind in her later years and was confined to a nursing-home bed. On one of my visits she shared her difficulties with insomnia. Thinking of my own great aunt in a similar situation, I tried to explain the benefits of the rosary as a prayerful yet practical aid in wakeful night hours. Either my explanation was inadequate or Elizabeth's staunch Mennonite training impaired her openness, but the rosary was not an option for her.

Great-aunt Elizabeth Showalter needed a rosary. I need Mennonite singing. Why can't we have both?

Katherine Donnelly lives in Harrisonburg, Va.

Too spiritual

by Norman Styers

I know someone more spiritual than Christ.
Lucifer wears no encumbering flesh:
He, a shadowy Hegelian Geist,
Has no rhythms to check his wickedness,
No simple needs to teach humility,
No contented fullness to curb his greed.

Angels don't suffice to satisfy me,
Mystic forces bore me silly, I need
No ghostly deity: Give me a God
Who deals in fire, oil, stones, water, bread, blood.

Norman Styers lives in Oklahoma City.

House churches are a key to reaching people.

Evangelism and the church in you

by John M. Drescher

Abraham Philip, a church leader in India, wrote, "If churches are defined as involving separate buildings and full-time church workers, the vast areas of the world will remain unchurched." This statement may strike at the center of the lack of evangelism in many parts of the world, including our own. Philip sees hope for India's evangelization in house churches ranging in size from 10 to 20 people. He points out that for the first three centuries there was no church building anywhere in the Roman Empire. The "Believers" church of China may be the fastest-growing Christian church in the world today. It grows by millions each year through house churches, and it does not plan to build church buildings.

> **From the Scripture it is reasonable to assume that when Paul began missionary work in a city, one of the first objectives was to win a household.**

Early churches were in believer's houses. Might the practice of the early church and the practice of the church during the most vital times of renewal and growth say something important to us? The assembly of Christians in hospitable homes goes back to the first days of the Christian church. It appears from passages such as Acts 1:13; 2:46 and 5:42 that house gatherings were the expected way of meeting. With few exceptions, when the marketplace or other public places in the city became a meeting place, the regular setting for both Christian meetings and evangelistic preaching was found in the homes of Christian believers. Additional examples of the house church are Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 4:15; Philippians 2; Hebrews 10:25; and Hebrews 13:24.

It seems clear that early Christian churches sprang up in believers' homes, with these groups selecting qualified leaders from their own ranks to serve as pastors and teachers. Overseers, pastors and teachers, such as Paul and Timothy, likely moved among these groups to give guidance and encouragement and to help start new fellowships.

From the Scripture it is reasonable to assume that when Paul began missionary work in a city, one of the first objectives was to win a household. This household could serve as a nucleus and center for future work. Paul was first of all a missionary, and after winning a family to Christ he found the natural place of meeting to be in that family's home. He tells how he worked with his own hands, along with the rest of the Christians, and so found a comradeship with others, even as the church was planted. It did not start with a paid pastor and a church building but with a Christian family committed to witness in its own community.

We have a picture then of a Christian family, scattered in work and personal witness, gathering a group of people together in a house to study Scripture and win others to Christ.

When we study the instructions of the Scripture regarding family relationships, the poor and the rich, the treatment of slaves, church schisms, the Lord's Supper, the development of church leaders and church organization in relation to house churches, it becomes a story with new intrigue. It also gives fresh insight and understanding to all these areas of church life. The development of church polity can never be understood without reference to the house churches. The coming together, where each is encouraged to share a Scripture, a song, an admonition or insight, has meaning in a small group of believers.

All these instructions take on new and meaningful dimensions when we see them in the context of a house church made up of people who knew each other well and who worshiped and shared a small household of faith.

ouse

The Netherlands
A prayer service at the Inloophuis de Ruimte drop-in center, Almere.
Ryan Miller, MMN

House churches and spiritual life: Might now be the time to take the house church more seriously than at any other time since the days of John Wesley? Wesley began his ministry at a time when it was unsafe to walk the streets. Crime ran rampant, and the religious, social and political worlds were decadent. There is strong evidence that God, through Wesley, saved England from disaster, perhaps oblivion, as a nation, by a renewal of Christian faith and social concern growing out of his home Bible studies scattered throughout the land.

More than half the people, even in our highly churched communities, will not venture into a church building. A church building is frightening and foreboding. If you doubt that, try to go, even as a regular churchgoer, to a strange church some Sunday morning. Only the most daring of non-churchgoers even consider it. How much less threatening and how much more personable and caring it is to be invited to a neighbor's home in the same community.

Further, a smaller group gives greater freedom to share in spiritual questioning and to sense the physical, material, emotional and spiritual needs of each person. Philip says that of all the churches he knows, house churches are the most spiritually alive. True evangelism may be more stifled than helped when the church settles down to constructing church buildings.

Evangelism is not stopped by persecution or by driving it underground. Evangelism dies again and again, throughout history, when it becomes dependent on church buildings. Church buildings are more for consolidation than for evangelism, more for withdrawal than for witness, and buildings more often put people out of reach than help people reach out. Planting churches is far different from providing church buildings.

As demonstrated often, the church grows spiritually and multiplies when persecution comes and even large church meetings are prohibited.

To say the least, church buildings in the future will need to become places where people not only worship Sunday morning, they will need to become centers which provide all kinds of services, meeting the vast cross section of people's needs in the community.

Likely there will always be a need for larger gatherings. As Christians sometimes met in the synagogues or in public buildings and, as in the days of Wesley, larger groups of Christians met in the church building of that time, so it appears there will always be need for larger gatherings. But the small group is the primary group, and the larger group is a secondary group.

Evangelism dies again and again, throughout history, when it becomes dependent on church buildings.

House church vs. church building: How long can Christians continue to put such large amounts of money in brick and mortar, organs and organization, and in the maintenance of buildings and structures used for only a few hours per week? Much of a church's contributions go into maintaining buildings. It is one of the prime examples of conspicuous consumption in a rich land.

Never has it been a sign of spiritual vitality to build beautiful church buildings. It's good to

Continued on page 14

Evangelism can happen if we are ready to stop passing many needy people and homes to go to a safe sanctuary.

Continued from page 13

remind ourselves that the cathedrals were built during the dark ages, and it's always a temptation, when spiritual life is low or absent, to emphasize the outward in an effort to persuade ourselves and others that life exists. But it doesn't work. Many of the most vital Christian, evangelizing groups today are meeting in places other than church buildings.

Will we not be forced to a house church in the future, perhaps by persecution, as in other lands, or because of the great cost of maintaining little-used buildings in an age of growing scarcity? Above all, the house church may be necessary if we are to reach our communities for Christ. The average congregation today is not reaching out to evangelize and the megachurches are largely transfers from other churches.

House churches in meeting needs: What might happen in any community if it were saturated with house churches? If, as Ralph Sockman suggested years ago, any 10 people who are serious about anything in a community have the power to change the lives of an entire community, what will happen if groups of 10 to 20 people gathered seriously around the Scripture and prayer? How much more vital such an experience could be in contrast to calling people to a cold church building where people meet almost anonymously, where a few professionals do the performance and where a pastor is supposed to meet the needs of hundreds of people, once a week, in a 20-minute sermon.

People today are craving something more personal than what large gatherings can provide. There is an increasing interest in the intimacy of a small, caring, sharing, praying group rather than one person smattering spiritual clichés over a sea of people sitting side by side in pews but often feeling miles apart.

What might keep such a thing from happening? Concern for property and program more than people would stifle it. Fear of trusting the Holy Spirit and the Scripture to lead such a group would prevent it. As long as we like to gather in groups where everyone does, thinks and says pretty much the same things and where all live on essentially the same economic level, it will not happen. As long as we are hesitant to open our homes to people other than relatives and close friends, it will not happen. As long as we pride ourselves in having all the truth already, it will not happen. As long as we are content with the noninvolvement, noncommitment and spiritual anonymity of the large group it will not happen.

What would it mean? But spiritual vitality and true Christian evangelism can happen again if we catch the vision that sees believers scattered for the purpose of witness. It can happen if professionals and nonprofessionals see our calling as a witness right where we are and use the opportunity of Christian hospitality to have a house church. It can happen if we become so knowledgeable and concerned for neighbors and community that prayer is made for such without ceasing.

Evangelism can happen if we are ready to stop passing many needy people and homes to go to a safe sanctuary. It can happen if we begin to share the gospel "in Jerusalem," even as our Master said. It can happen if God raises up many who see a vision for the church not in the hands of only professional and paid leaders but in the homes of Christians who do all kinds of work and who use what they have to share Christ.

Evangelism can happen with community, national and world impact if people the Lord is scattering to every city of the world start house fellowships in the immediate community and in this way scatter and gather the church throughout each city and community.

Then the big meeting, when it is held from time to time, will take on new meaning, dynamic and purpose.

John M. Drescher is a member of Finland Mennonite Church, Pennsburg, Pa.

Community: Offering prayers at Shiroishi Mennonite Church, Japan.
David Fisher Fast, MMN

The stupefying beauty of Mosi Oa Thunya

Of raincoats and Victoria Falls

by Jonathan P. Larson

Imposing majesty: Editor Everett J. Thomas ventures near Victoria Falls.

Beauty comes in two guises in this part of Africa. There is the mute, filigree beauty of a camel thorn cast against a magenta sky at evening or in the soft light of a desert dawn. Or consider the delicate trill of birdsong heard in a courtyard reverie, the quiet mauve carpet spread beneath a flowering jacaranda. It all steals over you ever so gently.

There is a second species of beauty, though, crushing in its power and scale, that takes the senses by storm, overwhelming everything in its path. Watch a lion burst from cover and close upon its prey, grasping it in a mighty embrace, while together they go down midst dust and cry, in an ancient drama. Or there you are, parked in an open vehicle, while a vast herd of elephant amble around you, the great, continent-sized ears flapping, arcing tusks brilliant in the sunshine, and the deep rumble of their mysterious conversation.

Such, too, is the stupefying beauty of Mosi Oa Thunya. Victoria Falls.

But the approaches to all such places, are hedged about with those insistent, savvy entrepreneurs. Of note at the Falls are those who rent the raincoats, and that on a perfectly sunny day. You might push your way past the hawkers while they call and cajole, assuring yourself that this is all so much huckstering. As you press down the lush, sheltered trail, you notice those who are returning from the chasm's edge. They look as though they have been in the surf, drenched through and through, water squishing in their track shoes. But too late to retrace your steps now. You press on.

By now the roar from the precipice makes talking impossible. The very ground beneath you seems to be ever so slightly ashudder. The undergrowth is shrouded in mist, the forest canopy shedding a nonstop monsoon. You tuck your digital camera beneath your shirt, but you know now how vain this will be. Then through a gap in the trees you catch a glimpse of movement—a deluge plunging wildly through the mist, disappearing in the abyss as clouds of vapor rise on the thunder to enfold you.

There before you flows a vision of such inebriating power that it beggars vocabulary and imagination. Scenes, wrote Livingstone 150 years ago, "gazed upon by angels in their flight." There is no resisting the staggering force of this encounter: the baptism of its spray, the hiddenness of its plunge to the depths, the grip of its sound, the scruff-of-the-neck way it seizes and possesses. How it dwarfs the self, makes the knees give.

And it keeps coming, has no season. Remorselessly, day and night, summer and winter, the water rushes to the brutal edge and flings itself over, frantic to find the ocean far away. It is unperturbed by the march of events, the ebb and flow of politics and strife. Even the pathos of drought fails to rob it of its imposing majesty. You find yourself reborn, cleansed, sanely restored, measured against such a vision.

And now you make your way back up the trail. You cannot help but think that, colossal as this is, it, too, is only a sign. A sign that just beyond your range of view is a flow of such vast strength and beauty that to see would blind you completely. You know it only by inkling. And that inkling is the squishing in your track shoes as you walk wordlessly back to the exit.

Actually, you don't miss the raincoat. Better—far better—to have been there without it.

Jonathan P. Larson lives in Gaborone, Botswana.

Visiting mission workers deepens friendship and love.

I knew I had to go. I was giving a little of my life for this cause. Why not give a lot?

Some days—on the job driving a truck from Indiana and delivering custom furniture in Manhattan, Boston or Chicago—sharing Jesus' love cross-culturally is admittedly the last thing on my mind. But every bookcase I haul makes a difference. As part of the labor force behind Mission Woodworking in Bristol, Ind., for more than seven years now, I've known all along that our work and subsequent donations from the company are especially important to the Friends of the Wolof ministry in Senegal.

But how much, I wondered, am I really involved?

Two years ago, my family hosted Jonathan and Carol Bornman and their children for dinner while they were in Indiana on furlough from their service through Friends of the Wolof and Mennonite Mission Network in Senegal, West Africa. During the meal, I inadvertently invited myself to their village. The very idea caused the Bornmans' eyes to sparkle and brains to whirl.

"You could do it. Yes, what if you came to visit and …"

I knew I had to go. I was giving a little of my life for this cause. Why not give a lot? Why not get involved? Why not go and see what my congregation, my employers, many of my friends and my family all were supporting?

Becoming frie

by Adam Fleming

No one can ever overestimate the value of a good friend. Pastors need them. Losers need them. God is the best of them.

In Senegal, the Bornmans and their children, Laurel and Caleb, hosted me. (Their oldest son, Isaiah, is at school in Dakar, Senegal's capital.) Never have I been treated so much like an old friend by people who knew me so little. But at the end of two weeks, when I was ready to go home and see my own family, these people had become another family to me.

Friendship, in context, can deepen quickly.

For example, my first day in Senegal, Jonathan Bornman introduced me to Amadou, a Wolof stone carver who works atop a cliff by the Atlantic Ocean in Dakar. It was my honor to spend two days carving basalt with Amadou there on the cliff.

We talked about politics, war, marriage, family and love. We talked about God. We talked about sculpting, sat in the dirt together sweating and carved. Our conversation was somewhat stilted, but we did our best.

At the end of my visit, Amadou spoke again with Bornman in Wolof about our new friendship. "We planted a tree," he said, "and now we will just have to wait to see how it grows."

Spending two weeks in Senegal was pivotal to an acquaintance with these workers growing into friendship. It was important to see, smell and hear the world in which they live. Not all is pleasant in Senegal, and much is beautiful, but only through experiencing a piece of their lives could I truly know them.

A cross-cultural worker feels like an artist who has labored for years to make one great oeuvre. Their work is sometimes exhilarating and sometimes hits the depths of depression: "Will I ever finish? Will I ever succeed?"

The artist labors in solitude and even secrecy. One day, a passerby may wander into the studio and stay for hours, pondering the depths of the incomplete piece.

"When it is done," says the passerby, "it will be the greatest work the world has ever seen. You finish it, and I'll pay for it. I'm now in this with you."

nds in Senegal

Presence: Adam Fleming with Amadou

Courtesy photos

The artist now knows someone else shares his vision. Others care for this work as much as he does. And that is the intangible, the little bit of heart the artist needs for the finishing touch.

The artist and passerby transcend a relationship of patronage. With a common vision, they build a friendship that could not happen by sharing any other interest or hobby. A worker and a supporter can build the same friendship.

Can I have any idea what my visit meant to the workers? When I was a boy of 13 my family spent a year in the center of Zaire. When the pilot came every six weeks to deliver mail, it was a visit worthy of the royal treatment. We'd have something special, reminiscent of home—pancakes. And that was a visit from someone who lived relatively nearby. The presence of a visitor can offer the intangible, the finishing touches.

What might it mean to you to make such a visit? Do you revere overseas workers so much that you think you'd have nothing to offer by way of a ministry to them? I almost did.

Instead, by taking a chance that in some small way God might use the broken vessel that is me, I had an opportunity to experience the life that throbs and pulses around the team in Senegal, from physical food to spiritual wrestling. I got to see the way these human, humble, powerful sent ones live, and I got to minister to them through my presence.

Nightly debriefing sessions with the Bornmans deepened our friendship. No one can ever overestimate the value of a good friend. Pastors need them. Losers need them. God is the best of them.

Friendship is love. As for the Bornmans and the rest of the Friends of the Wolof team goes, my love for them runs as deep as the sand under their village. It is said to be endless.

Now, as I grind out miles on I-80 in a truck at 3 a.m., hauling radiator covers that will help support the people sent by Friends of the Wolof and Mission Network, I know that I too have a task. I have friends in Senegal to remember in prayer in a way I never did. And because they are my friends, because of my love for Senegal, the Wolof people and Jesus, I hope to go back someday and take my family along.

Adam Fleming is a member of Lifespring Community Church in Goshen, Ind. His Web site is www.artzephyr.com.

The President of Iran to the U.S. President

David W. Shenk is a retired missionary and a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

On May 8, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of the Republic of Iran wrote an 18-page letter to President George W. Bush that says: "For some time now I have been thinking how one can justify the undeniable contradictions that exist in the international arena. … These have prompted me to discuss some of the contradictions and questions, in the hopes that it might bring about an opportunity to redress them."

This letter was the first direct communication from the Iranian government to the U.S. government since the Islamic revolution 27 years ago. President Ahmadinejad writes, "I have been told that Your Excellency follows the teachings of Jesus." He asks, "Can one be a follower of Jesus Christ … but at the same time have countries attacked?"

The Iranian president asserts that commitment to Christ provides a foundation for addressing core issues within the international arena. He invites discourse on key issues dividing the United States and Iran with a mutual commitment to submitting to the justice of God as revealed in Christ, the prophets and revealed Scriptures. He believes those who are committed to Abrahamic faith have a special responsibility to work together in submission to God. The president views the issues of justice within an eschatological worldview.

He asks, "Will we be given a role to play in the promised world where justice will become universal and Jesus Christ will be present?"

Leaders of liberal democracies don't know how to respond to an invitation for dialogue within a commitment to the Abrahamic God of justice. Many have dismissed the letter as political posturing by the Iranians; the U.S. administration has characterized the letter as rambling and lacking substance and has said that it will ignore the letter. Although the United States says it is committed to a diplomatic solution to the Iranian-European/American impasse in regard to nuclear developments, it seems a military option may be considered preferable to the dialogue invited in the letter.

Does the church have a role, when a door has been opened by the Iranians for a dialogue grounded in revelation that addresses political issues? I do not minimize the difficulties. A Qur'anic and Christ-centered peace are different visions, and the letter reveals enormous challenges, especially in regard to Israel and American militarism. Yet the president of Iran is pleading for a way forward in mutual submission to the justice of God.

This is the kind of commitment President Jimmy Carter brought to the table in the peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel at Camp David in 1978. The Torah was on the table, as it were, and a significant referent. All three principal participants—Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel (Jewish), President Anwar Sadat of Egypt (Muslim) and President Jimmy Carter (Christian)—believed the Torah is divinely revealed Scripture. Before entering the negotiations the participants held a press conference calling on all who embrace the faith of Abraham to pray for divine intervention in the enormously difficult negotiations that lay ahead. It is that kind of theologically, scripturally and spiritually grounded discernment the president of Iran is inviting.

These are perilous times. Iran and the United States seem to be heading toward a collision that portends calamitous consequences. Here is an invitation from a Muslim leader to find an alternative way forward as revealed in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The U.S. administration is vexed as to how to respond.

Is this Iranian invitation an open door for the church to respond? There have already been a couple of dialogues between Mennonite and Iranian theologians. Should a genre of dialogues be developed that speak to the political impasse? Or does our commitment to separation of church and state proscribe church engagement in a dialogue with political implications? Do Anabaptists have a responsibility to nurture responses to the invitation from the president of Iran?

Even more pertinent, how should Anabaptists and all American Christians respond to a plea from the Iranian Muslim president for us to follow Christ faithfully? TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Stories of giving**—J. Daniel Hess
- **The lasting effect of small gifts**—Tim Schultz
- **The miracle of the bread**—Miriam Martin

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

New membership category for Canadians

Churches will be members of conferences but not Mennonite Church Canada.

At Mennonite Church Canada's sessions last month, delegates loosened membership requirements, backed two methods for rooting the church in Scripture, and started a process to petition the government for a peace tax alternative. A total of 314 delegates—281 from congregations and 33 from area churches—attended the sessions held July 4-7 in Edmonton, Alta. This was a 35 percent jump in delegate attendance over last year's assembly in Charlotte, N.C.

After extensive discussion on the issue of local church membership, delegates voted by an 80 percent margin to loosen membership requirements. The decision opens the way for any of the five area conferences to allow a congregation to be a member of an area conference without being part of the national church. This was described as Area Conference Only Member (ACOM) status. Mennonite Church Canada bylaws had defined any church that is a member of an area conference to also automatically be a member of the national church, leaving congregational membership decisions up to each area conference.

Six congregations in British Columbia and one in Alberta indicated they wish to remain part of their area conferences but not the national church. Mennonite Church B.C. (MCBC) churches have had the option to be members of just the provincial level of the church for the past five years under a temporary arrangement that expires this summer.

This decision by delegates provides a way to make that temporary membership option permanent as well as extending it to the rest of the country. The major reason British Colombia churches want to leave the national church is due to congregations in other parts of Canada accepting practicing gay and lesbian couples into membership, according to MCBC moderator Gerd Bartel. MCBC assistant moderator Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen said congregations were reluctant to be a part of Mennonite Church Canada when the national church has little ability to determine whether a given congregation is a member or not.

"The reality has been that area conferences tend to [determine membership criteria] in relative isolation," she said. "The more we can create a spirit of trust and unity between area conferences, the more relationships we can build, the more willingness and desire there is to work through differences and to have flexibility with one another, and to learn to trust and love each other. I think that is what is lacking at this time."

A proposed amendment to add the option for congregations to be members of Mennonite Church Canada but not their area conferences was voted down by delegates.

God's People Now!
DELTA

Canadian Mennonite

Mennonite Church Canada's general secretary Robert J. (Jack) Suderman welcomes delegates to the assembly.

Delegates also wrestled through resolutions that resulted in an official scriptural foundation for Mennonite Church Canada as well as a rotating focus on selected biblical texts. One resolution selected as foundational the text from 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." This was a guiding verse for Menno Simons, the 16th-century church reformer from whom Mennonites take their name.

A second resolution directed that the church choose additional key biblical texts for study and nourishment, to be changed every two years. Study resources on the passage will be created and distributed to congregations.

Protesting military taxes: Another resolution addressed Canada's rapidly expanding military activity. The resolution stated that as the government was moving increasingly toward direct military intervention, was increasing military spending and forcing conscientious objectors to contribute to the military budget through taxation, Mennonite Church Canada's General Board should urge "the government to enact legislation which would allow conscientious objectors to direct the military portion of their taxes to activities of development and peace."

Audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending January 2006 showed that Mennonite Church Canada had a surplus of about $114,000. Donations were up slightly, the first time they have gone up since the financial restructuring in 2002. Delegates passed a new budget for 2006-07; it is slightly smaller than the past year's budget. —*Tim Miller Dyck for Meetinghouse*

> Area conferences tend to [determine membership criteria] in relative isolation.
> —Karen Heidebrecht

Two Philadelphia congregations grow

Cambodian church 'about a generation ahead' of large Indonesian church.

Greg Yoder

Leonard Burkholder (right), Eastern Mennonite Mission field staff for language development churches, with Adi Sutanto, leader of the Indonesian JKI network.

During the last decade of the 20th century, the Philadelphia Cambodian Mennonite Church grew rapidly to a peak membership of 250. Leonard Burkholder, Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) field staff for language church development, remembers huge baptismal services for 20 to 40 people at a time. But for the past five years, the church has declined—almost as rapidly as it had grown.

At one time the church served as a community center offering encouragement to new immigrants. But as people "got on their feet," their needs changed. Pastor Sarin Lay had built up the congregation after coming to Jesus through a vision when he fled Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror. He moved out of town; other members drifted away. Some plugged into other churches. Others threw all their energies into achieving "the American dream" and had no time for church.

Finally, last year, the remaining group of 12 to 15 committed Cambodian members decided to sell their big, two-story facility at 715 Snyder Street—a spot where the Cambodian, Italian and African-American communities overlapped.

After renting for several months, they purchased a row house in the heart of the south Philadelphia Cambodian community. Since Lay's resignation, Burkholder has been filling in as pastor, working closely with a Cambodian leadership team.

"It feels like a fresh start," Burkholder says. "And the church is starting to grow again. I'm encouraged by the new spiritual depth. The members are seeing the need to concentrate on spiritual growth rather than gathering a large number of people with no spiritual depth."

For years the church had not offered anything for children and youth. But last spring, Anna Mary Burkholder, Leonard's wife, opened a Sunday school with seven children. They meet on the second floor of the row house, above the enlarged living room that serves as a sanctuary for the new Cambodian Mennonite Church.

Even as the Cambodian church declined, a new Indonesian Mennonite Church sprang up, sharing the facilities of the Abundant Life Chinese (Mennonite) Church building at 1731 South Broad Street. As new immigrants flee persecution and economic difficulties in Indonesia, they've been packing out the church, which has just gone to two services.

Currently Burkholder works alongside an interim Indonesian pastor, San Pau Tju. Most of the Indonesians come from nominal Christian backgrounds. Many have left business and professional jobs to work at cash jobs in the agricultural industry as they struggle to gain a foothold in the United States.

As Burkholder compared the two vastly different congregations he's helping to shepherd, he reflected on what he's learned about immigrant groups. He notes that as newcomers to the United States, the Cambodians are about a generation ahead of the Indonesians.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

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London network celebrates first decade

Membership hits 400; 2,500 have participated in mediation workshops.

Some 40 people gathered in London July 6 for English tea and hospitality in the garden of London Mennonite Centre (LMC) to celebrate 10 years of ministry by the center's Bridge Builders program. The celebration included an afternoon of worship, singing and reflections on the significance of the ministry.

"Peacemaking … is such an important thing for churches, including those in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition," said Alan Kreider, who served as LMC director from 1974 to 1991.

"I see God's peacemaking as something that radiates out into all aspects of life—it is not simply a 'no' to killing. It's a profound 'yes' to wholeness," Kreider said. "We can't make peace and justice out there if we are not experiencing justice and peace in our own lives and churches."

Inaugurated in January 1996, Bridge Builders was launched under the joint leadership of Nelson Kraybill, then director of LMC, and Alastair McKay, current Bridge Builders director. Originally created to train and educate Christian leaders and church members in Great Britain, it has since added mediation and consultancy services.

In 10 years of ministry, Bridge Builders has trained more than 2,500 participants through workshops and weeklong mediation skills courses and has led many mediation and consultancy cases. In addition, 400 people have become part of Bridge Builders' Network, which offers ongoing support to church leaders.

In addition to sharing by those who were present, there were cards on display from those unable to attend.

"Congratulations! I describe the one-week course on transformative mediation as a week that changed my life—and as the best educational experience I have ever had!" wrote an Anglican priest from northern England. "I am looking for this understanding of conflict and mediation to spread more widely in my area."

A senior church leader wrote, "There is now such a positive sense of conflict resolution being possible at last—in no small measure due to the prayerful and godly work of Bridge Builders."

There were presentations by Peter Price, Anglican bishop of Bath and Wells and a Baptist senior regional minister from Yorkshire, and by Richard Blackburn, director of Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Peace Center. Recorded messages were sent by Kraybill, now president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., and Mary Thiessen Nation, now at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. Each served for several years at LMC.

Tim Nafziger

Will Newcomb (right foreground), director of Metanoia Book Service at the London Mennonite Centre, chats with a group of participants about Bridge Builders.

The celebration also marked a time of transitions. Charletta Erb, trainer and mediator through Mennonite Mission Network, reflected on her 2½ years serving with Bridge Builders. Her successor, Sharon Kniss, attended the gathering to gain an overview of Bridge Builders' work.

Bridge Builders is a program of the London Mennonite Centre, opened in 1953 by Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network. The center is jointly supported by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness through staff and financial aid. Mennonite Central Committee provides a grant that helps fund Bridge Builders.
—Alastair McKay with Ann Graham Price of Mennonite Mission Network

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Resiliency in Gulf States Mennonites

MC USA executive director visits churches, leaders hit by Katrina and Rita.

Courtesy photo

Jim Schrag, left, stands with Thunge near his boat in Venice, La. Thunge is a member of Lighthouse Mennonite Fellowship in Buras, La.

> This is where people live … [the levy] supports a whole fishing industry."
> —Robert Zehr

Shrimp season was opening the next day. Robert Zehr, moderator of Gulf States Mennonite Conference, said we probably wouldn't find fisherman George Reno or his son George Jr. They had just purchased a boat to replace one lost to Hurricane Katrina, and it needed parts and repairs.

I was on a visit to Gulf States Mennonite Conference, the second smallest of Mennonite Church USA's 21 area conferences. Robert and I were driving to the end of Plaquemines Parish, a string bean of land stretching down from New Orleans, lined with levies on either side for miles.

"Outsiders sometimes doubt if all the efforts of the Corps to repair these levies are worth it for this small strip of land," Zehr said. "But this is where people live, and it supports a whole fishing industry."

It was also the location of Lighthouse Mennonite Fellowship, probably Katrina's greatest casualty among Gulf States Mennonite Conference's 14 congregations in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Arkansas.

We pulled onto a drive leading to a simple cement block building, freshly shingled and painted bright blue. A sign in front announced "Lighthouse Fellowship Church, a congregation of the Gulf States Mennonite Conference."

The congregation has not worshiped there since Katrina. The building sustained severe damage but miraculously survived the winds and tides of Katrina. Surrounded by miles of lingering debris, the parish is still a colossal disaster site.

Earlier that day, we met with Lighthouse pastor Tony Duplessis and Donna, his wife, who lost their home in the storm. They are among thousands of Katrina's exiled victims, living in an unused parsonage providing ministerial services to a nondenominational congregation in exchange for shelter. Impressed with their resolve and sense of gratitude, I also saw grief and stress in their eyes.

In the fishing village of Venice, we met Thunge, a Vietnamese shrimper and Lighthouse member. He took us on a tour of his boat. Deep in the hold he pointed to where he had repaired a two-foot hole in the bow, below water line. It was a miracle, he said, that his boat survived, washed several hundred yards ashore, and that the flood waters had not entered his boat.

We later heard the shrimp season had opened well, with encouraging catches, providing not only hope for economic recovery but giving a boost to Mennonite brothers and sisters who are seeking healing and hope, clinging to their faith in the restorative power of God.

Steve Cheramie Risingsun, pastor of Poarch Community Church in Atmore, Ala., took us to his boyhood home among the Houma Tribe in the nearby Louisiana parish of Terrebonne.

The islands where this tribe lives are dotted with houses built on pilings up to15 feet in the air. Due to this specialized construction, most had survived the onslaught of Katrina's twin, Rita. We heard profound gratitude for the help of fellow Mennonites, other Anabaptists and Christians who had "come from the north."

Our visit to the eastern half of New Orleans confirmed "You have to see it to understand it." From the now-famous lower Ninth ward, past the once broken levy, the devastation was complete and apparently untouched. This destruction stretches for miles eastward.

Many pastors insist restoration needs to start with the refurbishment of churches. Iglesia Amor Viviente had sustained moderate damage in the storm. Ninety percent of the congregation has returned, led by Pastor Carlos Enrique Bernhard.

We traveled east, dipping to the coast between Pass Christian and Gulfport, Miss. For miles, foundations were all that remained of homes, businesses and schools. Unlike parts of New Orleans, this area appeared clean. I later learned it had been cleanly swept by the storm itself. The first two or three street blocks literally were pushed inland and deposited upon their neighbors' debris.

I discovered a resiliency in Gulf States Mennonite Conference. No one wishes for the attention a natural disaster brings. But there is a golden, if fleeting, opportunity in the experience—a rare chance to experience a deeper level of spirit and emotion in the fellowship of churches, joined with other area conferences in Mennonite Church USA and the larger Christian church.—*Jim Schrag, executive director for Mennonite Church USA*

MCC

Native American communities gather at the base of Bear Butte to protest commercial development in the area of this mountain, a sacred place of prayer for more than 30 Native American nations across the Great Plains.

MCC workers help protect sacred site

Proposed biker bar in Black Hills would violate 30 Native American groups.

Bear Butte, near Sturgis, S.D., on the outskirts of the Black Hills, is known as Mato Paha to the Lakota people and Nowah'wus to the Cheyenne. It is a sacred place of prayer for more than 30 Native American Nations across the Great Plains. On its slopes and at its base, Native American traditions and stories are passed from one generation to the next. Families come together for ceremonies and to seek herbs for healing compounds like the ones their ancestors made.

But commercial development in the area is creeping ever closer to the mountain that is also a state park and national historic landmark.

Recent plans for a 600-acre biker bar, concert venue and campground less than a mile from the mountain sparked protests from Native American communities and partner organizations of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which has worked in the Oglala Lakota Nation since 1992.

"Bear Butte to our people is a very, very spiritual place. It's the place where we go to fast, to meditate and try to be closer to the Creator," says Victorio Camp of the Intertribal Coalition to Defend Bear Butte. "It's the place where we worship, the place where we learn, the place where we gather medicine."

Sturgis is also the site of one of the largest motorcycle events in the United States. The Sturgis Rally, Aug. 7-13 this year, will draw more than half a million people to this town of 6,600.

During the Sturgis Rally and in the weeks prior to it, Native American groups plan to gather at Bear Butte to pray and protest. A July 4 to Aug. 15 Gathering of Nations is an opportunity for tribes to show their unity in protesting growing commercial development near the mountain.

"We're trying to preserve Bear Butte right now while we still can before the bars are built, before the stores are built, before the homes are built. We need to stand up and protect it," Camp says. He and others are pushing for a five-mile commercial-free zone around the mountain.

MCC has provided funds to support rallies on the issue. MCC workers Carl Meyer and Karissa Ortman Loewen have participated and taken video footage of rallies at their partners' request.

In addition, Meyer and Loewen collaborated with the MCC Washington Office to send email inviting more than 150 Anabaptists and MCC supporters to join the effort against the biker bar and commercial development in the area.

"We think it's really important for us to follow the lead of our partners," Loewen says. "I find this issue really compelling. It's really important we respect other people's places of prayer."

Most Mennonites would be horrified if an enormous bar was built near their place of worship, Loewen says.

Meyer and Loewen have also submitted a proposal to Christian Peacemaker Teams to have a presence at the Gathering of Nations camp. The couple also will likely be involved in some logistical support for the camp.

"We welcome all who want to stand with us on this sacred issue," Camp says.

He hopes more and more people will learn about the mountain and what it means to Lakota and other Native American tribes. The ceremonies and traditions he learned on its slopes shaped and nurtured him. A commercial-free zone around the mountain, he believes, can help guarantee that same chance for generations to come.

"That way, my children and grandchildren one day can use this mountain to pray as I did when I was a kid," he says. "This is about protecting it for our future children, the future of our nation."—*Marla Pierson Lester of Mennonite Central Committee*

It's the place where we worship, the place where we learn, the place where we gather medicine. —Victorio Camp

Zehr discovers he is famous in Japan

Crowded lectures, media attention bring 'restorative justice' to millions.

Trivia test: Who lives in a rural Virginia city, teaches at a small Christian university, is famous in Japan but had never visited Japan before this summer?

Until a few weeks ago, Howard Zehr would have said, "I have no idea."

Zehr, co-director of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., made his first trip to Japan this summer and was amazed to find himself facing crowded lecture rooms almost every day for two weeks.

He also received coverage from the two leading national newspapers and the three weekly Christian newspapers. The resulting articles reached the hands of more than 10 million people.

"My stuff is being used in Japan a lot more than I knew," Zehr says, an understatement that is typical of his style of speaking.

Japan's awareness of Zehr's worldwide work on restorative justice—Zehr is considered one of the founders of the field—apparently started with a translation into Japanese in 2003 of his book, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (1990).

The translator was a prominent law professor in Japan who ensured that the book circulated among students and professors of Japan's law schools, the Japanese bar association and some social welfare programs.

Zehr's book makes it clear that his advocacy of "restorative justice" stems from his Mennonite roots in Christianity. As a result, Zehr's book and tour served as a bridge between Japan's largely secular academic and professional community and Japan's minuscule Christian community, comprising less than 1 percent of the Japanese population.

Zehr tells his Japanese listeners that the development of the Western legal system, based in part on Emperor Justinian's Code from the late Roman Empire, introduced punishment into the Christian way of dealing with offenses. Zehr argued that a "restorative" approach was more in line with the teachings of the early church.

Zehr says that 20th-century Japan seems to have imported the punitive Justinian approach to justice and suggested that today's Japan might look to the harmony espoused at an earlier period by Confucius as inspiration for "restorative justice."

Zehr tells his listeners that the Western criminal justice system centers around making sure that offenders get the punishment they "deserve." In contrast, restorative justice is more focused on the harms done, the needs unmet and the obligations to "put right the wrongs." Ideally, everyone touched by an offense is involved in the "putting right" process.

The development of the Western legal system, based in part on Emperor Justinian's Code from the late Roman Empire, introduced punishment into the Christian way of dealing with offenses. —Howard Zehr

Photo provided

While traveling to his next appointment on the Tokyo subway system, Howard Zehr (right) is interviewed by Yasukazu Akada, a reporter for Asahi, a daily newspaper circulating to 10 million people across Japan.

Japanese editions of two other books by Zehr—his photojournalism books on victims of crime and on prisoners serving life sentences—were released in tandem with Zehr's visit to Tokyo.

Robert Lee, a retired Mennonite missionary and founder of Tokyo Mission Research Institute, was the organizer behind Zehr's appearances at the Tokyo Biblical Seminary, Japan Missiological Society, Waseda and Tokyo universities, and the Japan Bar Association. Lee estimated total attendance for the nine days of appearances at 1,000.

Mitsunari Nakashima, a recent graduate of Eastern Mennonite Seminary and its Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, accompanied Zehr for much of his travels and presented several lectures of his own.—*Bonnie P. Lofton of Eastern Mennonite University*

Books by Howard Zehr

Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice (Herald Press, 1990)

Transcending: Reflections of Crime Victims (Good Books, 2001)

Doing Life: Reflections of Men and Women Serving Life Sentences (Good Books, 1996)

CALENDAR

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, exploration of old and significant congregations that grew up alongside the Mennonites in Lancaster County, Sept. 16. Seven historic churches are currently slated for a visit. Costs per person are Friends of Society $52, nonmembers $62, groups of six or more, $48. For more information contact 717-393-9745 or lmhs@lmhs.org.

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, panel discussion led by Ray Hacker, Sept. 18, 7:30 p.m. The program is free and open to the public. For more information contact 717-393-9745 or lmhs@lmhs.org.

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, tour of the Conestoga/Manor Township area where many 1717 Mennonite immigrants settled, Oct. 21, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Cost is $52 for Friends of the Society, $62 for nonmembers and $48 for groups of six or more. For more information contact 717-393-9745 or lmhs@lmhs.org.

Wood River (Neb.) Mennonite Church, *100 year commemoration*, Aug. 26-27. The theme is "100 years of Sharing God's Love!" Matthew 28:20b. Activities include community barbeque Sat. with a program to follow. Sunday, hymn singing and former pastors will be sharing, followed by a church dinner. Everyone is welcome. For more information, contact Ralph Stutzman at 308-583-2407 or Pastor Darrell Holzinger at 308-384-4664.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bergen, Chloe Caroline, June 18, to Andrew and Jami Bauder Bergen, Fort Collins, Colo.

Boyer-Edwards, Noah, June 29 to Steve and Kathi Boyer Edwards, St. Louis, Mo.

Dreidger, Will, July 3, to Jason and Erin Dreidger, St. Louis, Mo.

Eby, Trenton Matthew, June 16, to Matthew and Kimberly Erickson Eby, Washington D.C.

Friesen, Adam Levi, July 4, to Wade and Heidi Knutzen Friesen, Locust Grove, Okla.

Gautsche, Eva Ann, June 29, to Cody and Blair Gautsche, Bronson, Mich.

Giannella, Matteo Roth, June 27, to Chris Giannella and Erin Roth, Baltimore, Md.

Haack, Riley Michael, June 10, to Justin and Samantha Siebert Haack, Crete, Neb.

Hackman, Micah Wayne, July 7, to Andre and Shelly Henry Hackman, Reisterstown, Md.

Hasbrouck, Aiden J., July 4, to Jim and Katrina Schwartz Hasbrouck, Sturgis, Mich.

King, Hannah Marie, May 17, to Brent and Rachel Sellers King, Belleville, Pa.

Kiogima, Kameron Dale, June 2, to Rodney and Amber Kiogima, Fisher, Ill.

Lehman, Elijah Ryan, June 24, to Ryan and Heather Beal Lehman, Davidsville, Pa.

Lusby, Chase Joseph, June 16, to Joseph Lee Jr. and Kristen Kauffman Lusby, Atglen, Pa.

Martin Horst, Solomon Emeric, June 15, to Benjamin and Janine Martin Horst, Eugene, Ore.

Matuszczak, Espen Anthony, July 6, to Nicholas and Tori Astafan Matuszczak, Carthage, N.Y.

Miller, Ayla Gail, June 24, to David and Lynette Weber Miller, Howe, Ind.

Miller, Levi James, June 8, to Ron and Lavonne Stutzman Miller, Landisville, Pa.

Moyer, Kylene Renee and Madison Faith (twins), June 15, to Keith and Mashelle Mummau Moyer, Lewistown, Pa.

Nancarvis, Isaac Thomas, June 30, to Tim and Karyn Sipos Nancarvis, Lititz, Pa.

Ruth, Aaron Kendall, June 16, to Kendall and Lisa Moyer Ruth, Lancaster, Pa.

Schmidt, Austin Luke, July 4, to Grant and Jami Jelken Schmidt, Henderson, Neb.

Schnabel, Jillian Rose, June 26, to Steven and Joyce Jolene Schnabel, Rapid City, Iowa.

Thomas, Matthew Jay, April 7, to Scott and Dawn Burkholder Thomas, Goshen, Ind.

Voran, Cameron Michael, July 8, to Michael and Jamie Cutsforth Voran, Newton, Kan.

Wightman, Alice Audrey, July 10, to Bill and Meg O'Brien Wightman, Harrisonburg, Va.

Williams, Aubrey Elizabeth, May 2, to Daniel and Jodie Epp Williams, Vienna, Va.

Worthington, Mason Christopher, June 29, to Christopher and Jennifer Kulp Worthington, Sellersville, Pa.

Yoder, Noah Elias, June 8, to Kent and Janelle Guntz Yoder, Glendale, Ariz.

MARRIAGES

Beck/Huber: Terry Beck, Pettisville, Ohio, and Carissa Huber, Pettisville, June 17 at Pettisville Missionary Church.

Bender/Kuhns: Melanie Bender, Kalona, Iowa, and David Kuhns, Akron, Pa., July 8 at the bride's childhood home, Kalona.

Beun/Unruh: Kyle Beun, Kidron, Ohio, and Lisa Unruh, Perryton, Texas, June 24 at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, Divide, Colo.

Block/Trimble: Krista Block, Henderson, Neb., and Daniel Trimble, Pender, Neb., June 10 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Boshart/Miller: Kristi Boshart, Wayland, Iowa, and Jon Miller, Kalona, Iowa, July 1 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Buller/Yost: Jim Buller, Lincoln, Neb., and Donna Yost, Lincoln, Juy 15 at First Mennonite Church, Lincoln.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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MMA Board Presidential Succession Committee Chair
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pswartzen@aol.com.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

Clem/Friesen: John Clem, Yankton, S.D., and Monica Friesen, Freeman, S.D., July 8 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Coleman/Davis: Melissa Coleman, Archbold, Ohio, and Tom Davis, Archbold, June 17 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Duerksen/Warford: Lowell Duerksen, Henderson, Neb., and Ronda Warford, Kearney, Neb., June 3 at First Christian Church, Kearney.

Ediger/Yoh: Erin Ediger, Westerville, Ohio, and Jeremy Yoh, Gahanna, Ohio, June 24 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Epp/Fehr: Allison Epp, Henderson, Neb., and Brian Fehr, Kearney, Neb., June 10 at Cornerstone Berean Church, Kearney, Neb.

Friesen/Klingenberg: Cassandra Friesen, Henderson, Neb., and Brett Klingenberg, Peabody, Kan., June 3 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Friesen/Rothfuss: Larry Friesen, Lincoln, Neb., and Ellie Rothfuss, Lincoln, July 8 at Hazel Abel Park, Lincoln.

Gingerich/Huddle: Sally Gingerich, Parnell, Iowa, and Jason Huddle, Clarinda, Iowa, June 24 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell.

Groff/Pincock: Anthony Groff, Manheim, Pa., and Niccole Pincock, Blackfoot, Idaho, July 15 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Janzen/O'Dell: Amy Janzen, Beatrice, Calif., and Walt O'Dell, Gunnison, Colo., June 24 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Mierau/Placke: Jonathan Mierau, Henderson, Neb., and Brooke Placke, Grand Island, Neb., June 24 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Miller/Weaver: Randy Miller, McClure, Pa., and Carmen Weaver, Mifflintown, Pa., May 13 at Lost Creek Mennonite Church, Mifflintown.

Risser/Tullis: Eric Risser, Middlebury, Ind., and Michelle Tullis, Middlebury, June 24 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

DEATHS

Aeschliman, Kenneth E., 91, Archbold, Ohio, died July 12. Spouse: (1st) Violet Frey (deceased), (2nd) Louella Liechty King (deceased). Parents: Enos and Dora Neuhouser Aeschliman. Children: Pauline Holsopple, Barbara Johnson, Elaine Moyer, Jay, Deborah, Teresa; 15 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 16 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Burkey, Perry, 92, Hesston, Kan., died July 4. Spouse: Teresa A. Eicher Burkey. Parents: Arthur and Amanda Stutzman Burkey. Children: Lillian Jean Burkey Laurinec, Margaret Ann Burkey Martin, Bonnie June Burkey Simons; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 10 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Burkholder, Charles Edward, 85, Harrisonburg, Va., died June 16. Spouse: Eula Burkholder. Child: Polly Fravel. Burial: June 19 at Weavers Church Cemetery, Harrisonburg.

Delp, Emma Shank, 91, Harrisonburg, Va., died July 1. Spouse: Earl R. Delp, Sr. Parents: Daniel and Abbie Layman Shank. Children: Earl R. Jr., Charles, Ronald, Earlene Wallicle, Harriet Miller, Evangeline Yoder; 18 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 5 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Duerksen, John P., 92, Hesston, Kan., died June 30. Spouse: Ruth King Duerksen (deceased). Parents: John R. and Susanna Quiring Duerksen. Child: Becky Oswald.; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 3 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Frey, A. Dale, 87, Archbold, Ohio, died July 1. Spouse: (1st) Kathryn Amstutz Frey (deceased), (2nd) Mary Short Frey (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Anna Rupp Frey. Children: Randall, David, Gene; six grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 4 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Goertzen, Anna Buller, 92, Beatrice, Neb., died June 8. Spouse: Harry Goertzen (deceased). Parents: David S. and Margaretha Epp Buller. Children: Eleanor Quiring, John, Carl; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 12 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Graber, Allen Ronald, 90, Goshen, Ind., died June 1. Spouse: Amanda Miller Graber. Parents: Abe and Bena Graber. Children: Velda Hershberger, Devon, Nelson, Idella Chupp; nine grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 5 at Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Hartman, Clifford A., 92, Goshen, Ind., died July 9. Spouse: Clara Litwiller Hartman (deceased). Parents: Amos and Susan Lehman Hartman. Children: Lloyd, Lyle, Merlin, Paul; 11 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 12 at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Hershey, Melvin L., 80, Lancaster, Pa., died June 30. Spouse: Ana Elizabeth Lefever Hershey. Parents: Willis and Ada Hershey. Children: Irvin, Glenn, Jay, Nathan, Ronald, Joyce King; 18 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 6 at Hershey Mennonite Church, Kinzers, Pa.

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Hull, Ralph Jay, 90, Goshen, Ind., died June 20. Spouse: LaVada Hooley Hull. Parents: Clyde and Eva Rink Hull. Children: Robert, Weldon, Judy Begley, Jerry; 13 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 24 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Immel, Oneta F., 81, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died July 6. Spouse: Glenn Immel. Parents: Venus and Ella Miller Hershberger. Children: Wayne, Gene, Nancy Strother, Betty Kandel, Charlotte Keim, Judy Yoder, Donald, Carolyn Renner; 19 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 10 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Isaak, Paul J., 75, Inman, Kan., died July 6. Spouse; Beryl Isaak. Parents: Peter and Eva Dirks Isaak. Children: Richard, Patricia Baird, Philip; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 10 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Miller, Ann, 93, Kidron, Ohio, died June 29. Spouse: Marvin Miller (deceased). Parents: Elias Peter and Sarah Gerber. Children: Joyce Landon, Les, Duane, Glenn; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 3 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Robert C. Sr., Davidsville, Pa., died June 3. Spouse: Dorothy Kegg Miller. Parents: Clarence and Flora Turner Miller. Children: Cheryl D. Moore, Robert C. Jr., Linda I. Moore; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 5 at Carpenter Park Mennonite Church, Davidsville.

Naffziger, Keith Tilton, 66, Washington, Ill., died July 9. Spouse: Patricia Kamp Naffziger. Parents: Kenneth and Helen Tilton Naffziger. Children: Lane, Eric, Lynnette Haller, Anne Livingston, Sarah; nine grandchildren. Funeral: July 13 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington.

Nice, Harold K., 75, Telford, Pa., died June 27. Spouse: Dorothy Bergey Nice. Parents: John M. and Katie Kerr Nice. Children: Robert, Dennis; 16 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 1 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Regier, Helen Buhr, 96, North Newton, Kan., died July 10. Spouse: Arnold J. Regier (deceased). Parents: Jacob H. and Gertrude Wieler Buhr. Child: Paul; two grandchildren. Funeral: July 24 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Schmidt, Eldon R. "Chick", 80, Hesston, Kan., died July 11. Spouse: Luella Schmidt. Parents: William and Elizabeth Schmidt. Children: Mary Jantz, Janice Kirsch, Janet Freeman; six grandchildren. Funeral: July 16 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Sommerfeld, Charley, 91, Hesston, Kan., died July 12. Spouse: Stella Bitikofer Sommerfeld. Parents: John and Ora Young Sommerfeld. Children: Keith, Berdena Sommerfeld Evers, Darrel; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 15 at Hesston Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Sprague, Frederick E., 77, Ligonier, Ind., died June 21. Spouse: Esther Eash Sprague. Parents: Frank and Ethel Growcock Sprague. Children: Gerald, Cathy James, Peggy Stuckman; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 24 at Ulrey-Renner Funeral Home, Ligonier.

Springer, Myrtle Mariette Birky, 93, DeKalb, Ind., died July 5. Spouse: Alan Springer (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Marietta Gearen Dully. Children: Mary Ann McDowell, Helen Maurer; stepchildren: Ronald, Mary Faith Litwiller; six grandchildren. Funeral: July 8 at Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Statler, Martha Glick, 77, Ephrata, Pa., died June 12. Spouse: Ronald Stalter. Parents: Elam M. and Priscilla S. King Glick. Children: Sara Reyes, Priscilla Mendez, Jeffrey, Katie, R. Lee, Betty Umble; six grandchildren. Funeral: June 15 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Swartzendruber, Duane Herbert Sr., 71, Morton, Ill., died May 10 of a massive heart attack. Spouse: Donna Monaghan Swarzendruber. Parents: Herbert Jacob and Fern Miller Swartzendruber. Children: Donna Cox, Duane, Amy Opel, Matthew, Susan Steffen; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Grace Church, Morton.

Zehr, Richard J., 78, Croghan, N.Y., died July 5. Spouse: Eileen Roggie Zehr. Parents: Alvin and Vera Moser Zehr. Children: Ruth Ann McVay, Barbara, Charlene Moser, Loretta Marks, Brenda Kniss, Rosemarie Yousey; 17 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Juy 9 at Croghan Mennonite Church.

Zook, Harold, 77, Fletcher, N.C., died May 21 of Parkinson's disease. Spouse: Dorcas Alwine Zook. Parents: Cory and Ruth Zook. Children: Cindi Stutzman, Cheryl (deceased), Carol Szafranski; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 27 at Southside Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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The newly formed **Fransen Family Foundation** welcomes applications for ***micro-grants*** from 501(c3) organizations. Interested charitable organizations should make application as directed on the foundation's Web site at www.fransenfamilyfoundation.org. All applications must be received by Aug. 31, 2006.

Goshen College is seeking a part-time ***daytime circulation supervisor*** for the Good Library. For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Spruce Lake Retreat is hosting a ***women's retreat*** Sept. 15-17, featuring Linda Evans Shepherd, speaker, humorist, author and radio host of Right to the Heart. For the support, encouragement and community with other women you need and deserve, call 800-822-7505 for reservations. (Early registration discount by Aug.16.) Located in the Pocono Mts. of northeastern Pa. (www.sprucelake.org).

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Contact Mike Wenger at mwenger@westernmennoniteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

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Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net.

Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

Goshen College Department of Sociology/Anthropology and Social Work seeks applicants for a ***tenure-track position in sociology***, an internationally focused major; Ph.D. in sociology required by Fall 2007. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment. Closing date for applications is Oct. 20, 2007.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following position for the 2006-07 school year: ***mathematics instructor***. Send resumé to: Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

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This Incomplete One: Words Occasioned by the Death of a Young Person, edited by Michael D. Bush (Eerdmans, 2006, $12), features 16 sermons in which preachers wrestle with the deaths of children and young adults, ranging from prenatal to mid-30s at the time of death. The preachers include classic theologians—Jonathan Edwards, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth—and select modern preachers.

Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics by Willard M. Swartley (Eerdmans, 2006, $34) explicates virtually all the New Testament, relating peace—and the associated emphases of love for enemies and reconciliation—to core theological themes, such as salvation, Christology and the reign of God. No other work in English makes such a contribution. Swartley concludes by considering specific practices that lead to peacemaking and their place in our contemporary world.

Sing, Little Children, Sing performed by Becky Degan (Herald Press, 2006, $15.99) is a CD of Bible-based nursery songs. The CD can accompany *Nursery Songbook, Nursery Happy Times Book* and *Nursery Stories of Jesus*. It includes such songs as "Jesus Loves Me," "Away in a Manger," "Helping Hands and Feet" and "Little Redbird in the Tree."

The Miracle, the Message, the Story: Jean Vanier and l'Arche by Kathryn Spink (Paulist Press, 2006, $16.95) tells the story of Jean Vanier, who in 1964 bought a small house in a village north of Paris and invited three men with developmental disabilities to share it with him. This was the beginning of l'Arche (The Ark), a special form of community in which people who are often rejected and despised by this world can develop their potential to the full.

A Gentle Wind of God: The Influence of the East Africa Revival by Richard K. MacMaster with Donald R. Jacobs (Herald Press, 2006, $14.99) tells how Mennonite missionaries sent to East Africa often returned to North America with a new vision of revival: Walk with Jesus Christ and allow nothing to disturb that relationship. Call sin sin and repent of it quickly, they proclaimed. Then enjoy the infusion of the Holy Spirit.

Ordinary Days: Family Life in a Farmhouse by Dorcas Smucker (Good Books, 2006, $9.95) is a spirited book, humorously written, for anyone who loves a good story. From picking blueberries while watching for bears, to teaching teenagers how to drive, to taking cross-country road trips, the book illuminates the ordinary moments of family life, written by a mother of six.

Leading Lives That Matter: What We Should Do and Who We Should Be, edited by Mark R. Schwehn and Dorothy C. Bass (Eerdmans, 2006, $40), draws together a wide range of texts—including fiction, autobiography and philosophy—offering challenge and insight to those who are thinking about what to do with their lives. Leo Tolstoy's novella *The Death of Ivan Ilych* is included as an epilogue.

Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11: A Call to Reflection and Action by David Ray Griffin (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, $17.95) says the evidence is strong that the U.S. government was behind the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, a "false-flag" operation orchestrated at least in part to marshal support for a "war on terror" against Muslims and Arabs. He goes on to explore how Christians should respond.

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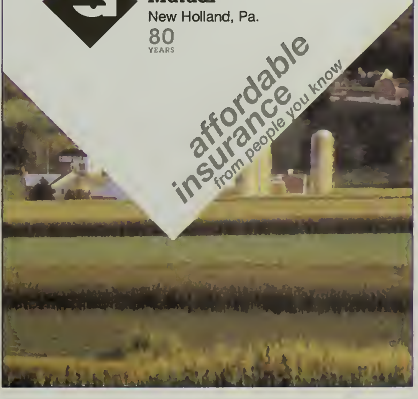

The church can be a 'real' family

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is director of admissions and financial aid at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

When my now teenage daughter was a preschooler, I traveled on occasion for work and church involvements, leaving my husband as the sole parent in charge of this little girl's care. Everything usually went smoothly, except for the small matter of combing Rachel's hair. Her hair was a wonder to behold—long, thick and capable of the most incredible tangles. Luckily, Sunday mornings were not a problem—some kind mother or grandmother would whisk Rachel away, and—voila!—her hair was beautiful.

I don't have a large extended family, so it's always been easy for me to consider my church relationships a "real" family. These people were my aunts and uncles, cousins, siblings. They were the ones who helped raised my children, who I ran to when I ran out of money, time or patience. When I had children, I expected my church family to pitch in and help raise them—from brushing a little girl's hair to lending emotional and spiritual support when a teenage son was making unwise choices. Going to church was always like going home—the place where they have to take you in. I had never moved more than 20 miles from my community, if you exclude a term of voluntary service and time spent away at college.

We model for the world what it is like to be a part of God's family and invite others in.

Then we left, moved a state away. On the one hand, the thought of a move was exciting. It was a new job opportunity for me. My husband and I knew many people who moved every few years as pastorates and other church assignments changed or as students started, then graduated from, college and graduate school. How hard could it be to move only 250 miles?

Yet my greatest anxiety centered around finding a church family. I wanted a place that would feel like home. I knew enough to not expect to duplicate my prior church experience, but I wanted to have a church that would accept and embrace us, warts and all. Like family.

The first year in our new setting passed by in a blur. New home, new job, new church; it wasn't until the kids got settled nearly a year later that I did my own grieving for what I had left behind. During the first Lenten season in our new place of residence, I cried every Sunday during church. My husband kept asking what was wrong, but I wasn't able to properly articulate it at that point. Later I figured out it was grief. I was missing my family.

We visited our old community several times during those first few months. The first time we went back after my soggy Lenten journey, I realized at least part of what I had been missing. From the time we arrived in church until we left, people embraced me in big bear hugs. It wasn't because we were there on a visit; this was what happened every Sunday—embraces and kisses and my husband's cheek colored with several different shades of lipstick.

I also became aware of another significant level of comfort that came from worshiping in that community. We knew the rhythms of life in that space. We knew when to sit and stand, what hymns the congregation would sing lustily and which ones we would struggle through together; we knew the stories behind some of the prayer concerns and testimonies, who to ask for what, why many things were as they were. We had been part of shaping that history, and sliding into a pew on Sunday morning there was as comfortable as putting on an old shoe that had been shaped and molded to my foot. I wondered what it felt like to new people.

Actually, I had an idea. Having served as a pastor in that church, I'd been in a few conversations with new folks in various stages of fitting in. It is not easy to enter a new family system. A constant challenge for congregations is to pay careful attention to integrating new individuals and family groups into the larger church structures. In this way, we model for the world what it is like to be a part of God's family and invite others in.

We have found a wonderful church home, and I regard it as family. An early indication of the care we would experience came early on a cold November day. My husband was out of town, I had an early morning appointment and a sick child who couldn't go to school. Who could I call at 5 a.m. to ask to stay with my son? What an inconvenience that would be for someone. After fretting for a while, I picked up the phone and called someone from church, who immediately—even happily—agreed to come. That's family. TM

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Chairman of the board and chief executive officer for Jayco, Wilbur Bontrager stands near the end of the production line at the company's main plant in Middlebury, Ind.

This businessman sees 'small returns' as a major investment

Stewardship is about more than money. It's about a person's relationship with God. Just ask Wilbur Bontrager. He not only knows how to keep his company running, he knows how to keep it giving. His Mennonite values shape the way he does business, which means that both his company and his family make use of what he considers a useful tool – money – by giving back to his community and church.

For Wilbur, life is about more than money. It's about giving of your entire self to offer a 'small return' for what God has already given. And with a third generation of family and shareholders maturing, Wilbur hopes they – and the rest of Mennonite Church USA – will recognize that following Jesus into the world can be a part of your day job, too.

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Gordon Houser

Weeds, wells and worship

The Lord commands us to "choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19), but sometimes we get sidetracked fighting forces we see as choking life. Choosing life involves "loving the Lord your God, obeying him and holding fast to him," the passage goes on in verse 20. We find life in clinging to God.

Weeds: Every gardener knows the bane of weeds and spends hours fighting them—with hoe, chemicals or curses—all so the vegetables or flowers planted earlier may grow.

We, too, expend energy fighting evils in the world, sweating (and cursing?) over issues that bedevil us and others we care about.

At the fifth annual meeting of Bridgefolk a month ago (see July 18, page 19), Susan Classen offered a helpful piece of wisdom from her experience. Susan, who spent more than two decades with Mennonite Central Committee in Central America, now lives and works at a Catholic retreat center in Kentucky.

She said she found herself spending much energy trying to fend off the invasive plants that grew there. Then one day she saw a daylily pushing itself up through a crack in concrete, and she thought, Life finds a way.

Our goal is to seek that water of life, not focus on the details of the wells by which we access it.

She decided to focus her energy on connecting with life, particularly with the Life that is in Jesus Christ. For her, invasive weeds included institutions that sought to place boundaries on her spiritual life. She chose to seek to strengthen life where she found it.

If weeds are the bane of gardens, their balm is water. All of life needs water. Susan used another image as she talked about her experience as a Mennonite working with Catholics and being drawn to a more sacramental life.

Wells: She saw different traditions as wells seeking the common aquifer, which represents our life in Christ. Again our goal is to seek that water of life, not focus on the details of the wells by which we access it.

For her, "Catholic spirituality helps me be a good Mennonite." At the same time, the Mennonite tradition of peacemaking has enabled her to help with conflicts in her Catholic community.

A growing number of people, like Susan Classen and Katherine Donnelly (page 8), are experiencing the riches of both Catholic and Mennonite traditions.

Bridgefolk is one place where this experience finds expression. Its mission statement (see www.Bridgefolk.net) says it is "a movement of sacramentally minded Mennonites and peace-minded Roman Catholics who come together to celebrate each other's traditions, explore each other's practices and honor each other's contribution to the mission of Christ's Church."

Worship: A central element to Bridgefolk gatherings is worship, including prayer, Scripture reading, singing and biblical reflection. The most recent meeting looked more directly at the subject of the Eucharist (meaning thanksgiving), which is at the center of the Mass but celebrated less frequently (and differently) by Mennonites.

Despite the different understandings in the traditions about the Eucharist, the participants expressed a desire to experience the presence of Christ in worship. That becomes an important way to access the water of life, to "drink deeply of the grace of God," as Eleanor Kreider said in her presentation of the Mennonite Communion tradition.

We find life by "holding fast" to God. One important way to access that life is through our worship. Insisting that everything in our tradition is correct and that we have nothing to learn from others can be a weed that chokes the search for life-giving water.

Bridgefolk is an example of Christians who come from different traditions seeking to learn from one another without attempting to convert each other. Participants have experienced both the pain of historical separation and an enriched sense of life through sharing their stories face to face. And through worship they experience the presence of their common Lord.—*gh*

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The Mennonite

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Growing into faith

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

In my years at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church I have baptized 31 teenagers. I remember every one. Such occasions make me awfully glad I became a pastor.

I grew up in a tradition (Pentecostal) that favored dramatic conversions. As a teenager, I sometimes envied those who had been rescued from a life of crime or dissipation. I'd listen in awe to evangelists who had been delivered from some horrendous circumstance and foolishly envy them their great about-face.

In comparison, my own conversion seemed bland and unexciting. I'd been a sinner, no doubt about it, though of the unglamorous and routine kind. And I'd certainly experienced the grace of deciding to follow Jesus and felt the power of the Spirit wash over and through me. But the change in direction I felt seemed, in comparison to more exciting conversions, to be more like a soft right turn than a complete 180.

At East Chestnut Street we invite those being baptized to share their faith stories with the congregation. A few have been able to identify a specific place and time in which they gave themselves over to Christ. But most have described a more gradual, almost imperceptible and even inevitable process of growing into faith.

These young people had always known themselves to be Christians, always known themselves to be on the Way. Their faith developed and matured over time, with baptism marking and affirming that development. They had never felt apart from the people of God.

Influenced as we are by evangelicalism and revivalism, such testimonies may give us pause. While I cannot name an exact date, I do know what year I accepted Christ. I know where I was and what the circumstances were. I did not question the faith commitment and readiness for baptism of our young candidates. It's just that I'd never heard such stories before.

These days I give thanks to God for such blessing. Imagine, a generation of young people so well-nurtured, so well-tended, so enfolded into the life of the church that they cannot remember anything other. Young people who understood baptism and church membership and Communion as inevitable, who knew themselves all along to be God's beloved children and the followers of Jesus. If this were the only thing our congregation accomplished over the last 20 years, we could rest assured of being well received on the last day.

There is great and wonderful good news in knowing that God's mercy is available to all. We rightly celebrate the dramatic conversion of folks from the most desperate conditions imaginable. Such testimonies remind us that no one is beyond the reach of God's Spirit, no one is so far away that they cannot be brought near by the saving power of God in Christ. And we turn to such stories when we feel lost, bereft and miles apart from God. They remind us that even we are not so far gone as to be unredeemable. Thanks be to God.

I want to offer that same thanks when a young person comes to baptism having never known anything other than relationship with Christ and the church. They, too, bear witness to the Holy Spirit's power. They, too, reveal a miracle of sorts, in this case the miraculous formation of a community so grace-filled that it is capable of raising up its children in the way they should go.

If the angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner is brought safely into the fold, surely they dance for joy for the 99 for whom the fold has always been home. Both are miracles of divine power and grace and ought to make us sing praise to that Good Shepherd whose will it is that none should perish. In both cases we give thanks to God.

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 16, August 15, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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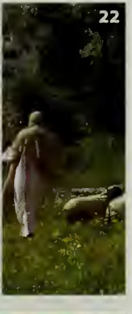

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Cover: Photo of Martha and Ruth Yoder Maust by J. Daniel Hess

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

See beyond the diagnoses

I just read the article "The Man Born Blind and the Person With Bipolar Disorder" (July 18). Thanks for being the voice for so many people who have been diagnosed with mental disabilities. Each of us has a place in God's kingdom, and each of us has gifts and talents to offer. I hope this article will encourage people to see beyond the diagnoses. It's a tough thing—especially for people who haven't had a lot of experience with disabilities—but it is so important for all of us to recognize that we are God's children. Thanks for being this voice.—*Mandy Slaubaugh, Harrisonburg, Va.*

No happy endings for most

I was pleased to see *The Mennonite* giving attention to disabilities concerns with three articles and a book review in the July 18 issue, including Leah Kabira's cover story, "The Man Born Blind and the Person With Bipolar Disorder." I trust the positive examples of congregational and community support will serve as an inspiration and model to others. Sadly, most individuals and families challenged by disabilities and mental illness do not experience even the limited "happy endings" we see in these articles. When situations become chronic, we in the church do not always know how to care. Misinformation, stigma and caregiver fatigue still exist in our congregations.

Letter writers in the same issue (Readers Say) highlighted the "voices from the margins" and rightfully called the church to do more to recognize the gifts of women and underrepresented racial/ethnic people. Advocacy for those concerns is provided in the Mennonite Church USA structure via associate groups. Families, friends and people with disabilities and mental illness have an advocacy and support organization, albeit with a more limited structural relationship to the church. Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADNet) was formed in 2003 after the church structures said, in effect, "We think this ministry is needed but it doesn't fit into our agenda."

ADNet is a growing network to keep this agenda in front of the church. ADNet continues to invite individuals and congregations to visit our Web site at www.adnetonline.org. Congregations are offered a free sample resource by filling out a simple form. Booklets, videos, newsletters and online resources are available on bipolar disorder, developmental disabilities, aphasia and many other topics. Let us join together to encourage each other to include people with disabilities and mental illness more fully in the life of the church and community.—*Paul D. Leichty, network director, Anabaptist Disabilities Network*

July 4 issue

I just picked up the July 4 issue of *The Mennonite* and wanted to let you know that I really enjoyed reading it. The articles I read were a thoughtful look at the national holiday. As I return to the United States, this issue gave me hope that I am returning to rejoin a church that is doing its best to share God's vision of shalom in North America in a way that gently—and sometimes firmly—nudges mainstream Christianity and American culture. I especially appreciated Everett Thomas' editorial ("Christian Revolutionaries?"); it succinctly points out how our ancestors likely viewed the founding fathers. It is a thought exercise I'd never tried before but that I found really provocative and helpful. I also recognized some of the voices from Colombia in the "Women and Peacemaking" article. I was impressed by the amount of research Jeanette Harder did and how she succinctly communicated her main points. The Independence Day sermon by Dee Dee Baldwin was very good as well.—*Tim Nafziger, London, England*

***Misquoting Jesus* is OK**

I agreed with Gerald Biesecker-Mast's critique of *The DaVinci Code* in the article "*The DaVinci Code, Martyrs Mirror* and the Faithful Church" (July 18) but do not agree with his discrediting of *Misquoting Jesus* by calling it a spinoff of *The DaVinci Code*. *Misquoting Jesus* is worthwhile to read. It is well documented, informative and easy for lay people to read and understand. Step by step, it outlines how the Bible came to be, and there is no reason to suppress those facts.
—*Melvin Esh, Philadelphia*

IN THIS ISSUE

Stories about people are important to our readers, and we hope the stories about Mennonites who give generously will inspire all of us in our stewardship. J. Daniel Hess provides articles about three such households (beginning on page 8). Also in this issue we focus on another set of people: racial/ethnic members of Mennonite Church USA who are often underrepresented. Our news coverage of two major gatherings this summer begins with Gordon Houser's report of the Native Assembly July 24-27 in Poarch, Ala. On pages 20-21 we provide exclusive coverage of the Dallas convention called "From Every Tribe and Nation Racial/Ethnic Peoples Conference." This gathering brought together the biennial meetings of the African-American Mennonite Association and Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church). Our new assistant editor, Anna Groff, provides her first news story after covering the convention's young adult activities.—*Editor*

Fooled by President Bush
I really wanted to support our Christian president so I allowed him a few minor missteps, including: pulling out of environmental agreements after saying he would not as a candidate, leaking only the scant intelligence in support of the invasion of Iraq, flying home Easter weekend to sign legislation to invade the Schiavo family's privacy but then continuing to vacation during the beginning of Hurricane Katrina, ignoring U.S. laws against torture and eavesdropping of American citizens without warrants, conveniently forgetting his relationship with the late former CEO of Enron.

But now this man has the nerve to swear and not even apologize for it. I am completely disgusted and will never support him or his friends again. How did I get fooled for so long that he was sincere in his Christian faith?—*Michael Bauman, Concord, Calif.*

Vote to influence foreign policy
Recent letters to the editor (Readers Say) have been questioning how to influence U.S. foreign policy in a more peaceful direction. Feet-on-the-street help communicate an alternative viewpoint to policy makers, as do letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines. A more direct approach, however, is to elect U.S. representatives and senators—those responsible for declaring war in this country—who will enter this nation into war with great reluctance and only after sober and honest consideration of the relevant facts. I urge everyone to register to vote and learn about your state's candidates for Senate and House. Keep abreast of candidates' appearances and take the opportunity to talk to them about the war face-to-face.—*Jane Shull, Lancaster, Pa.*

Share the figures
An article in the July 18 issue ("Elkhart, Ind., Building Project on Hold") states that the price for a new Mennonite Church USA office building will be $9 million plus. Surely someone has completed a study comparing whether it is financially wiser to stay in the current building or to build a new one. Why have these figures not been shared with the people who will be asked to contribute the $9 million?—*Ken Weaver, Washington, Ill.*

A good step in a good direction
Thank you for running the story about the latest developments in the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference having to do with Weldon Nisly ("Credential Restored to Seattle Minister," July 4). It was a great gathering in that part of the world, and the work they did is a good step in a good direction—*Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Calif.*

Healing hurts in our denomination
One mission of the church is to provide a healing ministry. In our denomination there are hurts and abuses that need to have healing. When such hurt exists in a limited geographical setting, then the congregation and/or possibly the district conference can work at healing. But if such hurts extend in a broader venue, where in the context of our denominational structure can such healing be initiated?—*Lois Kenagy, Albany, Ore.*

How about something for children?
Now that *Story Friends* and *On the Line* are no longer being published, could something of special interest to children be included in *The Mennonite?—Eldina Nussbaum, Orrville, Ohio*

Thanks for Floyd Landis
I never heard of the Mennonites until Floyd Landis won the Tour de France. In Europe he's a real hero. He fought and did not give up. Some might say it is just a sport. Nobody is saved, but he is an example for us. I have really enjoyed his pugnacity. Thanks, Paul and Arlene Landis, for giving birth to this champion.—*Johan Goris, Antwerp, Belgium*

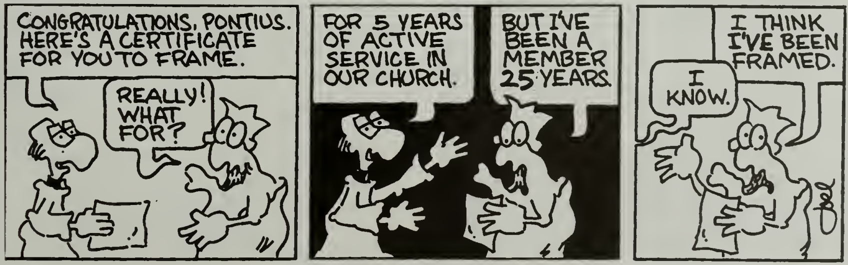
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

How much of your tithe do you give to your church? (69 votes)

○ All of it (33%)
○ Most of it (30%)
○ Some of it (22%)
○ I do not tithe. (14%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


CONGRATULATIONS, PONTIUS. HERE'S A CERTIFICATE FOR YOU TO FRAME.
REALLY! WHAT FOR?
FOR 5 YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE IN OUR CHURCH.
BUT I'VE BEEN A MEMBER 25 YEARS.
I THINK I'VE BEEN FRAMED.
I KNOW.

IN BRIEF

The cross and the sword don't mix

Like most pastors who lead thriving evangelical megachurches, Gregory A. Boyd of Woodland Hills Church in Maplewood, Minn., was asked frequently to give his blessing—and the church's—to conservative political candidates and causes. After refusing each time, Boyd finally became fed up, he said. Before the last presidential election, he preached six sermons called "The Cross and the Sword" in which he said the church should steer clear of politics, give up moralizing on sexual issues, stop claiming the United States as a "Christian nation" and stop glorifying American military campaigns.—*New York Times*

Tap vs. bottle

Plastic bottles are piling up in landfills as billions of gallons of fossil fuels are used to ship bottled water worldwide, reports the *Utne Reader*. In the United States—where half of Americans drink bottled water regularly, and one in six avoids the tap entirely—consumers have been convinced that bottled is better, even though the Environmental Protection Agency does a better job of monitoring what comes from home taps than the Food and Drug Administration does tracing water sold at the grocery store. —*The Marketplace*

'Shadow Voices' film sets sales record

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Yolonda Kelsor of Nicholasville, Ky., battled depression since age 15. Her father was an embalmer for a funeral home; her mother was a teacher, and Kelsor said depression was just one of those things no one ever talked about, in spite of her mother also suffering to the point of being hospitalized. Kelsor felt rejected, and she ended up marrying men who were a lot like her father: One was addicted to alcohol, the second to work.

Kelsor is one of thousands who have viewed *Shadow Voices: Finding Hope in Mental Illness* off-air—through dozens of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) affiliates across the United States.

The documentary by Mennonite Media aired last December and January on ABC affiliates (at their discretion), but endorsement and use by NAMI has pushed sales of this documentary to 1,426 in the first seven months of its release, more than double the amount sold in the same time period of the next highest Mennonite Media DVD/VHS program. *Fierce Goodbye: Living in the Shadow of Suicide* sold 568 copies in its first seven months and has now sold a total of 1,146 copies since August 2004.

Sixty NAMI affiliates have purchased the program, compared with only 42 Mennonite churches or pastors purchasing it so far.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

John Robinson

Congolese vote for the first time in 40-plus years

Kara Klassen, a Canadian Mennonite election observer, works with Jeremie Ngoya, a Congolese Mennonite election observer, at a voting center in Kinshasa. On July 30, the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo voted freely in national elections for the first time in more than 40 years. At the invitation of Congolese Mennonite churches, Mennonite Central Committee organized a group of 22 observers from Canada, England, Holland and the United States to assist in this effort.—*MCC*

Settler youth attack CPT member, visitor

HEBRON, West Bank—Christian Peacemaker Team member Tracy Hughes and a CPT visitor were walking near the Beit Hadassah settlement on July 25 when a group of six to seven Israeli settler teenage boys threw large rocks at them. One teenager had been standing against the building and called the others out of the settlement. Hughes sustained bruises to the head and back, and the visitor sustained a cut to his leg.

The assault began within sight of the military checkpoint at the base of the stairs to Qurtuba School. The Israeli soldiers at the checkpoint did not respond. Hughes and the visitor tried to file a police report at the Israeli police station in front of the Ibrahimi Mosque. A police officer told the pair that without a photograph of the teens, filing a report would be useless. If the pair had a photo of the teens the police could use it to charge them with two attacks, if they get reported for another attack.

This attack was the most recent of four assaults on international peace workers in the previous month.—*CPT*

AMBS, Goshen, EMU report increased giving

ELKHART and GOSHEN, Ind., and HARRISONBURG, Va.—Contributions to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart) annual fund during the 2005-2006 year were the highest ever, AMBS President Nelson Kraybill reported. Giving for operating expenses during the fiscal year totaled $1,737,170, compared with $1,600,568 the previous year.

According to Executive Director of Development Roger Nafziger, overall giving to Goshen College was up $455,642 from last year, with a total of $6,928,047 contributed. An increase in overall contributions from alumni was particularly significant, with gifts adding up to $436,088 over last year's total.

Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg) received $6,585,205 in total contributions for the 2005-2006 fiscal year ending June 30, a 24 percent increase, or $1,293,843 more than last year. Kirk L. Shisler, vice president for advancement, reported that contributions of $1,730,000 to the University Fund set a new record, surpassing the 2005 annual fund total of $1,591,000 by more than 8 percent. —*AMBS, Goshen College, EMU*

Laurelville center celebrates expansion

MT. PLEASANT, Pa.—Laurelville Mennonite Church Center opened a newly renovated and expanded kitchen and dining hall July 1. Around 100 community members joined Laurelville staff to

Scott Sundberg

uilt of thanks goes to Mennonite Disaster Service

uggling with a variety of issues, Dean Eula Lewis, who ends Nanih Waiya Indian Mennonite Church in Preston, ss., has found new purpose in quilting for others. She made s quilt for Mennonite Disaster Service for its work with First tion peoples. Steve Cheramie Risingsun presented the quilt MDS July 27 at the Native Assembly in Poarch, Ala.—*MDS*

celebrate the grand opening with an open house.

In 2004, under the direction of executive director Jerry Troyer, Laurelville launched a $2.5 million capital campaign that included a $1.5 million kitchen-dining hall renovation and expansion. Construction began in November 2005 and was completed in early June. The new facility includes seating for 320, an expanded buffet line with beverage and dessert stations, remodeled restrooms, gift shop, and a foyer with free wireless internet access. The Troyer Group of Mishawaka, Ind. served as architects for the project.—*Laurelville Mennonite Church Center*

VMBM, Mission Network formalize connection

HARRISONBURG, Va.—An agreement signed during a meeting July 9 between Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions (VMBM) and Mennonite Mission Network ensures continuing cooperation between the two mission agencies.

From VMBM and Mission Network, leaders Loren Horst and Stanley Green and board chairs Phyllis Miller and Lee Schmucker signed protocol agreements approved by the boards of the respective institutions.

The protocols commit the two agencies to continuing collaboration both in the United States and abroad that advances the work of the larger Mennonite-Anabaptist mission community and benefits both U.S. and global churches. While the two agencies have a common foundation, they sometimes differ in policy, strategy and priorities. Leaders said the protocol agreements honor and respect those differences while acknowledging common vision and strategies.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Goshen students given ministry fellowship

GOSHEN, Ind.—This summer Goshen College student Krista Ehst from Bally, Pa., is spending her time leading worship, preaching, attending meetings and visiting church members as a pastoral intern in the Ministry Inquiry Program at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Gainesville, Fla. At the same time, student Timothy Showalter of Harrisonburg, Va., is riding across the country on his bicycle with other Mennonite young adults, stopping along the way at Mennonite churches to have conversations about the future of the church, in a journey they are calling Bikemovement.

Both are junior Bible and religion majors and are among 70 undergraduate students awarded this year with a ministry fellowship from the Fund for Theological Excellence (FTE).

The award included a $1,500 stipend for educational expenses, $500 in funds to obtain mentoring for their vocational discernment and support to attend the FTE Conference on Excellence in Ministry, which took place June 21-25 at the Austin (Texas) Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

The Fund for Theological Education is an ecumenical organization, working to boost the number of capable young candidates for ministry by offering fellowships and supporting exploration of ministry.—*Goshen College*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

> "You can look at much new songwriting that has come out of Australia, Europe and the United States since the 1960s and not get a sense that Christ was incarnate. The songs talk a lot about enthroning Jesus in our praises. You never get a Christ who argues, who's angry, who deals with women, who heals people. You never get the full story of faith. In the end these songs are debilitating to faith."—*John Bell, interviewed in* The Christian Century

IN BRIEF

Oaklawn appoints president, CEO

Laurie Neumann Nafziger has been named the next president and CEO of Oaklawn Psychiatric Center in Goshen, Ind. She will begin Oct. 1. Nafziger has been with Oaklawn for more than 18 years in a variety of administrative capacities, most recently as executive vice president and chief operating officer.—*Oaklawn Psychiatric Center*

U.S. vehicles do more damage

Although Americans drive just 30 percent of the world's nearly 700 million motor vehicles, they account for nearly half the greenhouse gases emitted by vehicles worldwide, reports the *Los Angeles Times* (June 28). The reason? Americans drive farther, and their cars get lower mileage and use fuel with more carbon content. *—The Christian Century*

If you build it

Volunteers from Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., helped Lauderdale County (Miss.) Habitat for Humanity build a new home for a family in Meridian, Miss., in early July. The family's original house was damaged by Hurricane Katrina last year.—*Meridian Star*

Giving as a family

by J. Daniel Hess

To say the Yoder Maust family lives simply does not adequately describe their state.

Homebodies: Martha and Ruth Yoder Maust

They sit on the front bench at Shalom Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, all six of them when Rachel is home from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). Even if Rod weren't an elder and even if Martha weren't church council chair, we'd think of them as congregational keystones.

Look the second time and you'd agree that they'd fit comfortably in a traditional synagogue, Rod with his long uncut beard and Martha with clean sturdy Goodwill clothing that bespeaks European rather than contemporary American tastes. In fact, Martha seems to have Jewish friends and Muslim friends and African American friends all over the place.

They bought a big fixer-upper in a rundown section of town, choosing it because of empty lots on either side that they bought so that Rod could plant fruit trees and cultivate a garden. Fortunately city ordinances don't prohibit their raising ducks.

It's good the huge old house has nooks and crannies, because they are homebodies. That is, they truly live there, read there, play trumpet and recorders and guitar there and meet the world at their doorstep. They walk the 13 blocks to Global Gifts or the 15 blocks to the city library.

Photos on pages 8,9,12-14 by J. Daniel Hess

When Rod isn't fiddling with his antiques or fussing with one of his instruments he may be found refinishing another piece of molding for the living room ceiling. Meanwhile, Martha is in her fourth semester of Hebrew studies at Christian Theological Seminary. The family enjoys biking on the Monon Trail. The children, all of them, are bookworms.

To say the Yoder Maust family lives simply doesn't adequately describe their state. They are an oddity in commercialized America. They do spend money—but differently somehow. They travel, but as a family with a purposeful destination—to Ethiopia (where son Benyam was born), to France (childhood home of Martha's mother), to Egypt (where Martha's sister and her husband now live), to Mexico (where Rod's brother was doing agricultural research) and to general assemblies of the church.

Fiddling and fussing: Rod Yoder Maust

Great Is The Lord

In trying to describe them, I turn to a saying once posted on a bulletin board: "There are two kinds of rich people: those who have lots of money and those who have few needs." They fit both kinds; they are doubly rich. And they've learned how to solve that "problem."

Rod is a psychiatrist who works for Midtown Community Mental Health Center. Its clients are low income from the inner city. Martha, a family physician, works for People's Health Center in one of the city's most impoverished areas, where only 6 percent of the clients have insurance. Thus, they earn medical incomes, "close to the market rate."

Because of their priority on family and home, however, each of them has opted to work part-time. Rod puts in 25 hours a week, which includes time with medical interns and education seminars. Martha works three days a week. Thus both of them have time for children and chores.

They have money. Enough to max out the allowable pretax amount for their 4(3)B pension fund. Enough to pay for one child in college and two in a Catholic high school. Enough to take a family trip every two years. Enough to buy Rod's grandmother's farm and adjoining acreage in northern Indiana. Enough to sustain their modest style of living. More than enough.

And the rest of the money?

Rod says they tithe their income for the congregational offering. "That's the beginning," he says. Then they direct contributions to numerous agencies of the church. "I grew up to my grandfather's dedication to Mennonite education," says Martha, "so we give to Bethany [Christian School in Goshen, Ind.], where Rod attended high school, Goshen College, AMBS [Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.] and Meserete Kristos College in Ethiopia." And then add to this Mennonite Central Committee, Heifer Project, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Indiana-Michigan Conference, Columbia Road Health Services and the Nazareth Project. I learn that they have a vital connection with each agency. For example, the Nazareth Project is a U.S.-based

Continued on page 10

It's one thing if I use as my point of reference the doctors in the lounge talking about their yachts and another thing to compare me with Zaire nurses who don't have enough money to buy their own stethoscope.—Martha Yoder Maust

Continued from page 9

nonprofit that supports Nazareth Hospital, where Martha worked as a volunteer for eight months before starting med school. I know what they gave last year. It is a large figure.

"It's almost embarrassing," says Martha, "that we can work half time, pay our bills, support our children in school, set aside funds for our retirement, give a lot to charity and there still is money left over."

Rod retrieved a yellow pad on which he has recorded their donations in recent years. "If a development officer stops in to ask for $100,000, we must tell them that $100,000 isn't sitting around here somewhere. But in our lifetime, if we give regularly, it might amount to $100,000."

Rod, who seldom talks about himself, is unable in this conversation to hide his deep enjoyment of giving. Clearly, writing checks to church agencies isn't a burden. Although Reuben grumbles—teenage style—that his parents "overtithe," Rod obviously takes delight in the opportunity to give. Martha's demeanor says, It's our way of life.

Thus they are doubly rich—with money and with few needs.

I heard again the name Ron Sider and the impressionable book *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. I heard again stories from international experience. Martha: "It's one thing if I use as my point of reference the doctors in the lounge talking about their yachts and another thing to compare me with Zaire nurses who don't have enough money to buy their own stethoscope."

The mention of Zaire moves the conversation to the huge disparity between rich and poor. "It isn't right," says Rod. "Our giving is nowhere like the widow and her mite. While we do live modestly and our children do sometimes complain, I would not want to spend more on ourselves."

As for giving medical services free of charge, both practitioners are limited by institutional policies. However, both respond when legitimate pro bono services can be offered.

Perhaps because Rod and Martha do not show off their wealth, they are not bombarded by personal requests for money. "But trouble is, if you give too much money to church agencies, you get visits from development directors. We are courteous, we give them a meal rather than having them spend agency money by taking us out to a restaurant, we sometimes learn about the work of the agency, but they do not affect our decisions about giving."

The parents in this family spoke of financial giving. But monetary contributions are not the beginning or the ending of this family's response to God. The whole family, led by the parents, seems to be given as a total unit to the church. Rachel, formerly active in Mennonite Youth Fellowship, is now at EMU, where she will be ministry assistant in her dorm this year. Reuben plays in the congregation's ensemble. Ruth has participated in Scripture reading and has sent out lovely handmade cards to members. Each of the children, including Benyam, participate in hands-on projects. Reuben recently helped lay conduit for electrical lines; Ruth and Benyam helped in a recent remodeling/painting project.

Besides serving as an elder, Rod serves as the unofficial musical director of the congregation. Martha enjoys teaching Old Testament studies in adult Sunday school classes. Over the past number of years, the Yoder Mausts have invited many newcomers to their house for Sunday dinner.

Oh, and about that house in a rundown part of town. The area has been discovered by gentrifiers. Old houses are being refurbished. New and expensive houses are being built. The Yoder Maust family's old house is now worth many times what they paid for it. I can hear Martha saying, "It's almost embarrassing."

J. Daniel Hess is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Generosity Project promotes holistic stewardship

The Generosity Project developed as the result of concerns about denominational funding issues in Mennonite Church USA; this project benefits from insights of the "Research Study of Denominational Giving" conducted by Advancement Associates Inc., and Mennonite Church USA staff. The research study focused on seven key areas of Mennonite Church USA member's attitudes and motivations for financial stewardship. A careful review of the research study prompted Mennonite Church USA leadership to ask for a new holistic stewardship strategy, relevant to churchwide missional efforts. The current project represents a three-year plan, as the first phase of an ongoing emphasis for holistic stewardship in Mennonite Church USA. This project is primarily an internal leadership project to coordinate holistic generosity efforts of Mennonite Church USA with congregations, conferences and agencies.—*Marty Lehman, director of financial development for Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA*

Transformation Mennonites USA

by Helen Alderfer

Even the hopeful sounding title of transformation
carries change on its unwieldy back—
changes that, good or bad, wrench one from the familiar,
the cherished comfortableness,
and always comes with a price.
Those who do not jump the ship
have something every day to pity and forgive.
What will history write of this disparate people
who lived through centuries of changes,
sometimes displaced and sometimes martyred?
That we became a people known for unity
despite the differences that tugged
and sometimes tore apart.
That we forged new patterns of justice and peace
that we lived with amazing grace.

Helen Alderfer is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

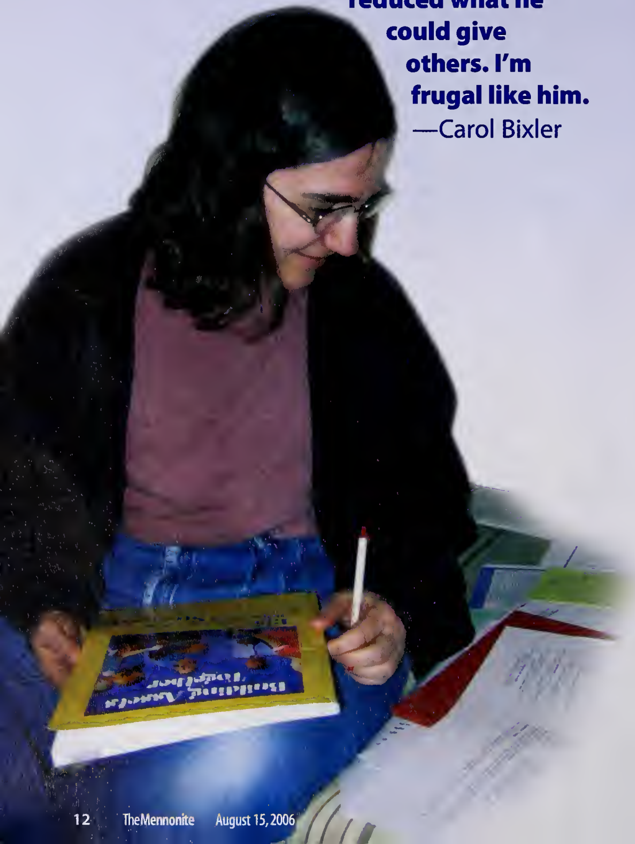
Children join adults for a worship service at the Mennonite Church USA convention called Atlanta 2003.

Giving for reason

by J. Daniel Hess

Sam and Carol Bixler sho

> **My dad … gave liberally. He thought he should owe no man anything, so he didn't borrow. He hated to spend because he thought it unnecessary, and it reduced what he could give others. I'm frugal like him.**
> —Carol Bixler



Sam Bixler says, "It's still a bit embarrassing to think that an article about our giving would appear in print, but …"

Many generous people are, like the Bixlers, private about their contributions. For them, generosity is not a matter of honor but of faithfulness.

The Bixlers consented to the interview hoping that such reports would "help each of us think about how we should live our lives different from the rest of the world."

"It started way back," says Sam.

"*Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*," adds Carol, his wife.

"We read it in college, Ron Sider's book," says Sam. "The question is not how much you give but how much you keep."

Sam is in dusty everyday clothes, having taken a break from his installation of ceiling tiles at Shalom Mennonite Church in Indianapolis. It's Monday, the day he chooses not to go to Eli Lilly and Company, where he is a senior project engineer. Carol is the homemaker, organizer, school volunteer, visitor and hostess of the family. She typically carries multiple responsibilities at church. Today she walks to church for the conversation about giving.

"How we give is an expression of our separation from the world," says Sam, a fellow who says little in a crowd. He is unusually animated as he explains his convictions about money. A tithe is just a start, he says.

I don't ask how much they give but learn in our exchange that in the year of lowest giving, it was 17 percent of gross, while the highest was 33 percent. Currently they are also helping pay for son Eric's college bill.

"My dad was a literalist," says Carol. "He gave liberally. He thought he should owe no man anything, so he didn't borrow. He hated to spend because he thought it unnecessary, and it reduced what he could give others. I'm frugal like him."

Sam's parents tithed, thanks in part to his mother's convictions. His father's coffee buddies once scoffed at his giving so much to the church.

nore than generosity

determined spunkiness.

Now Carol and Sam give "a chunk" when each paycheck comes in, and they also send checks to Mennonite schools, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership. Alumni of Mennonite Central Committee (Burkina Faso, three years), they also send checks to Akron, Pa.

Having adopted three children, they contribute to several adoption agencies. Two local cultural organizations benefit from their gifts. They send money to Wycliffe, in support of friends. However, they do not normally respond to special appeals.

There is a strong countercultural belief system in operation in the Bixler household. Sam works four days a week as a matter of principle.

"If I worked full-time we'd have more to give. But spending time to earn money is, in fact, spending me. Is that how I want my life to be spent—earning money?"

"Our time together at home is important," says Carol. Sam is in process of remodeling the family room. His being at home frees up Carol for her interests. Free Mondays also allows time for their volunteering at Global Gifts. The Bixlers are musical (recorders, violin, percussion, vocal), so their practice at home contributes to congregational music.

For a time the Bixlers withheld the U.S. telephone tax but found that this decision resulted only in confused correspondence. Now their deductions are sufficiently large to cut payment of federal taxes. "When charitable donations go up," says Sam, "taxes go down." One time the IRS asked them to show receipts.

There is a determined spunkiness about their will to give. When they learned that Lilly would match contributions only to educational institutions where they studied, Carol enrolled in an online seminary course in order to qualify for a Lilly match of contributions to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

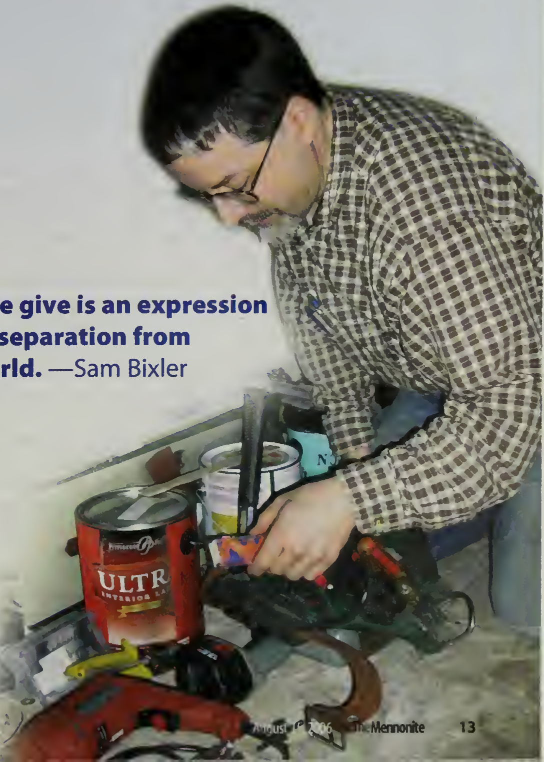
Behind the spunkiness, however, is their knowledge of poverty. "How can I lay aside money for our pension or for college for each of our children when I know what our friends in Burkina Faso are going through?"

While both Sam and Carol learned the habit of giving from their parents, they don't know yet whether their practice of giving will be emulated by their children.

One can't talk long with the Bixlers before beginning to think about "how we should live our lives different from the rest of the world."

J. Daniel Hess is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

How we give is an expression of our separation from the world. —Sam Bixler



Giving is a 'fait

Jon Schrock and Mandy Yoder learned giving habi

After another day of practicing anesthesiology and of doing pastoral work, Jon Schrock and Mandy Yoder sit in their Indianapolis living room and reflect on their giving to the church.

"It's a habit," says Mandy, who is soft-spoken but no pushover. "It's a faith thing."

Jon, gentle and lacking pretensions, remembers the quarters his father gave for him to place in the offering plate. More vivid is his memory of "the first check" his parents wrote when receiving their salaries. It was a check for the church. If, at the moment, there weren't enough funds in the bank account, the check was saved for the moment "when it wouldn't bounce." This is a powerful image for both Jon and Mandy.

After Mandy began to earn money as a child, delivering newspapers, she filled out a pledge card for the church budget and gave $1.25 per week. She credits her parents and her home church for encouraging her desire to give to the "big church" budget instead of just in Sunday school and for taking her small pledge seriously. Another vivid memory of talking about money with her parents is a conversation she had with her mother when Mandy's wealthy playmate invited her along for an overseas family vacation. "Mom explained that she and Dad had decided to work for church organizations, which meant lower salaries. She also explained that they were committed to giving money in our congregation's offering each week. She didn't say these things as though she were some suffering martyr; she simply stated the facts of their commitments and priorities, which didn't always leave enough money for expensive vacations. I will always remember that conversation."

Both Jon and Mandy, now 20-somethings, value models from childhood for helping form their attitudes toward giving today. Jon's models are his parents. Mandy speaks of parents, grandparents and two great-aunts who were generous in many ways.

'Giving back to God': Jon Schrock and Mandy Yoder

We had amazing experiences in those schools. And while we were there, people were donating money for our benefit.—Mandy Yoder

thing'

by J. Daniel Hess

om their parents.

Jon and Mandy's generosity has been shaped perhaps by another occurrence. Mandy received money from the church for attending Bethany Christian High School in Goshen, Ind., and both received funds to attend Goshen College. Mandy's seminary education was paid entirely by the church she grew up in. Today they give to all three institutions because "we had amazing experiences in those schools," Mandy says. "And while we were there, people were donating money for our benefit. So naturally we want to give now, too, to help others experience what these schools have to offer."

Both Jon and Mandy, now 20-somethings, value models from childhood for helping form their attitudes toward giving today.

Jon's life-long dream of being a medical doctor led them to Indianapolis. Besides his study of anesthesiology, he plans to do additional training in pain management and hopes someday to practice in both fields of medicine.

Mandy happily followed Jon to Indy, and after finishing her last year of seminary, she got on the phone to hunt for "a helping job" with a social service agency. She ended up working for the Homeless Initiative Program doing case management and street outreach, where she would relate to homeless people living "under bridges and in the woods." Later she was asked to join the pastoral team at First Mennonite Church.

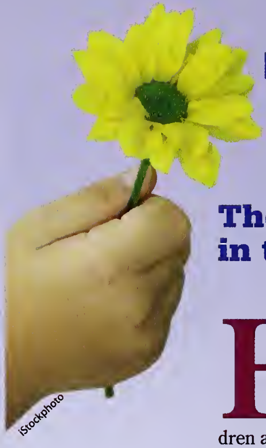
The habits of giving that they formed early in life continue. They reserve a fixed percentage of income for charity. The vast majority of their giving is to their congregation, but on top of that "in January we send a check to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., in April to Goshen College, in November to Bethany Christian Schools and in December to Mennonite Mission Network," they say.

Mandy and Jon wish it were still the time when all of their giving to these organizations could be done through their congregation—the day when church agencies and schools were generously supported by every congregation—but since they know that is no longer the case for many churches, they send checks directly to destinations of choice in addition to giving to these organizations through their church, whose annual budget still generously supports church agencies.

Jon and Mandy don't argue about family finances or their giving. They agree on their commitments. And both are active in keeping the books and writing checks.

Their conversation about giving seems not to be about an extraordinary discipline but a natural and normal "giving back to God a part of what we have been given." For them it truly is a habit born out of early training, lifelong practice and deeply held values.

J. Daniel Hess is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.



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The lastin

The value of a gift is in the giving and not in the size or cost of the gift itself.

Have you noticed the significant increase in the size and value of gifts these days? Looking at Christmas or birthday photos of two or three decades ago in which beaming children are shown uncovering a stuffed animal or toy truck, the contemporary observer is reminded that our culture was poorer and simpler then and that it took much less to please eager recipients of gifts.

Once at a restaurant, I watched as several women filed back to a banquet room to attend a baby shower. Some of the wrapped gifts were so bulky that it made it challenging for the women to maneuver back to the party. In these more prosperous times, when bigger seems better, we must never forget that the value of a gift is in the giving and not in the size or cost of the gift itself.

We were not particularly close—this affable older couple and myself—during a year of study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., more than a decade ago, but they invited me over to their apartment for dinner. At the end of our time together, they presented me with a handmade gift, a small bookmark.

Small gifts are often powerful tokens of tenderness that expand in reach well beyond their intended purpose.

There is the sad likelihood that these casual friends would have already faded from my memory, as school friends tend to do, but because of their gift, their gracious memory lives on. Of all the bookmarks in my possession, the one they gave me is the only one I keep track of. Although it is small and represents simple workmanship, I treasure this laminated photo of a single bird perched on a metal fence with a prairie scene on the horizon.

What makes this particular bookmark different is that it represents the kindness that prompted my friends to give it.

Small gifts are often powerful tokens of tenderness that expand in reach well beyond their intended purpose. When we pray, we most often thank God for the little things in life, and consequently we may feel spiritually stunted for these seemingly small prayers. But we shouldn't.

"Thank you, Lord, for this day … thank you for the food Grandma prepared … thank you for that acceptance letter." Those are powerful prayers but not because the gifts we received were overwhelming. No, the source of power in those prayers is in the humble reveling in the giving that took place, thanking God for the care and hope that prompted the simple blessing we received.

What makes us love God more is knowing that God went through a process of giving when God's only Son was sent into the world. Jesus didn't just show up one day on his own. He was given, and that has made all the difference.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son" (John 3:16).

Last summer I served as a teacher of seventh- and eighth-graders during our church's annual Vacation Bible School. On the last day of that hot and tiring week, one of the quieter students presented me with a homemade card. My name was on the cover, composed of colorful letters individually cut out. I told her I would probably still have that card 20 years from now, and I probably will. The time will come when the theme of the VBS week will have evaded me and the peppy songs will be long forgotten. But among my valued possessions will be a brown card with some kind words written inside.

Is there some small gift you have been avoiding giving because it seems too small? Is there a card you could place in someone's church mailbox? Have you created something small, like the bookmark gift, that could be of lasting value to someone? Even as I look around my room, I pause to give thanks for little gifts: "Thank you, Lord, for that calendar Martha gave me … thanks for the little calculator from the inner-city student … thank you for the scenic coffee coaster … and also for those encouraging words spoken to me after church today. And while I'm thanking you, Lord, I ask that you remind me each day about the lasting effect that small gifts presented to others might have."

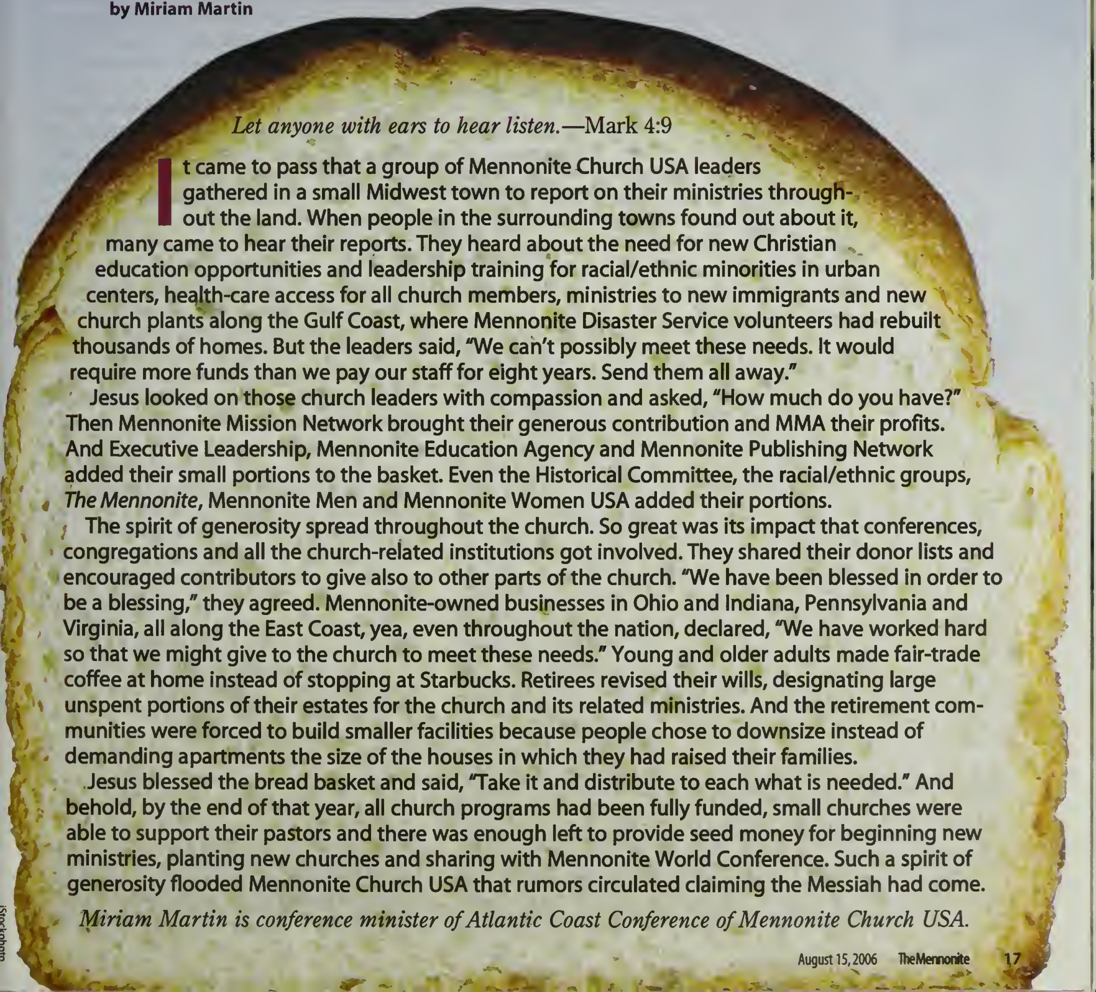
Tim Schultz is youth pastor at Clarence Center/ Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

effect *of small gifts*

by Tim Schultz

The miracle of the bread

by Miriam Martin



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Let anyone with ears to hear listen.—Mark 4:9

It came to pass that a group of Mennonite Church USA leaders gathered in a small Midwest town to report on their ministries throughout the land. When people in the surrounding towns found out about it, many came to hear their reports. They heard about the need for new Christian education opportunities and leadership training for racial/ethnic minorities in urban centers, health-care access for all church members, ministries to new immigrants and new church plants along the Gulf Coast, where Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers had rebuilt thousands of homes. But the leaders said, "We can't possibly meet these needs. It would require more funds than we pay our staff for eight years. Send them all away."

Jesus looked on those church leaders with compassion and asked, "How much do you have?" Then Mennonite Mission Network brought their generous contribution and MMA their profits. And Executive Leadership, Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Publishing Network added their small portions to the basket. Even the Historical Committee, the racial/ethnic groups, *The Mennonite*, Mennonite Men and Mennonite Women USA added their portions.

The spirit of generosity spread throughout the church. So great was its impact that conferences, congregations and all the church-related institutions got involved. They shared their donor lists and encouraged contributors to give also to other parts of the church. "We have been blessed in order to be a blessing," they agreed. Mennonite-owned businesses in Ohio and Indiana, Pennsylvania and Virginia, all along the East Coast, yea, even throughout the nation, declared, "We have worked hard so that we might give to the church to meet these needs." Young and older adults made fair-trade coffee at home instead of stopping at Starbucks. Retirees revised their wills, designating large unspent portions of their estates for the church and its related ministries. And the retirement communities were forced to build smaller facilities because people chose to downsize instead of demanding apartments the size of the houses in which they had raised their families.

Jesus blessed the bread basket and said, "Take it and distribute to each what is needed." And behold, by the end of that year, all church programs had been fully funded, small churches were able to support their pastors and there was enough left to provide seed money for beginning new ministries, planting new churches and sharing with Mennonite World Conference. Such a spirit of generosity flooded Mennonite Church USA that rumors circulated claiming the Messiah had come.

Miriam Martin is conference minister of Atlantic Coast Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

The health of Mennonite churches

Bruce R. Chartrand is a member of First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, N.Y.

In a health-conscious world, we may wonder how healthy Mennonite churches are. What are our weaknesses and strengths, and what issues lie ahead? Two questions that remain without clear answers are these: What is a Mennonite? What do we believe?

These particular questions probably get no two answers alike. Why is this? Are we so complicated that we don't have answers others can comprehend? Why are there so many different Mennonite churches? Have we strayed from our forebears' teachings, or have we grown to interpret the Bible with a new set of eyes, the eyes of Jesus Christ? These questions may never be clearly answered, but I suggest a possible start to help others understand who we are.

The one weakness that I feel is plaguing the church is that there are so many divisions and splits it is hard to get a clear picture of who we are and what we believe. I live in a rural area, and within a mile of the road are 10 households. Of the 10, eight attend seven different variations of the Mennonite church. Why is this? Is it because of interpretation of Scripture, or is it because of human differences? How do you explain to an outsider who we are? I wonder if a possible solution to this problem would be to gather all the different groups together and develop a unified statement of our common beliefs. This would give us guidelines on how to answer questions about us.

> If we work together on our weaknesses, build on our strengths, put aside our differences and strive for unity, we will be the healthy church that Jesus Christ called us to be.

This brings me to our strengths as Mennonites. One strength is our belief that God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit make up the Trinity. We believe the Bible is God-inspired, and we use it as a guide for our lives. We believe in believer's baptism. Probably the one thing that has been a trademark of all Mennonite churches is our belief in nonresistance. We are a people of peace and are willing to testify to that. Another strength we have is our sense of community. We are a people willing to help others in need. We share our faith, our resources and our time freely as a witness to God.

What issues face Mennonites in the future? Perhaps we can all agree that change would be a good answer. We are constantly challenged to live in the world and not of the world. The simple life of hard work, working by hand, families living close to home and a home church community are rapidly being replaced by easier work, technology, families living all over the world and a global church community. We Mennonites must be able to adjust our lives to these changes and be prepared to witness for Jesus Christ in an ever-changing world.

A few other changes that lie ahead are worship style, music and dress. These are based more on culture and personal preference than on Scripture. We have seen a change from the days of the pastor leading the whole worship service to many people taking part. The plain coat and cape dress are being replaced by casual clothing. Hymns are being replaced by praise and worship music.

What do we do as Mennonite churches in the midst of our differences, weaknesses, strengths and future issues?

One solution is to look to Jesus Christ. We should follow his example in everything. We should look at our brothers and sisters with love and compassion. We must remember that God loves everyone. We need to give and take in our congregations. We must live in peace and unity with each other. We are called to walk humbly and be salt and light to the world.

Mennonites are truly trying to seek God's will today as much as they were years ago. Nothing has stayed the same since God created the world, and it is not going to. If we work together on our weaknesses, build on our strengths, put aside our differences and strive for unity, we will indeed be the healthy church that Jesus Christ called us to be.

Correction: David W. Shenk (Speaking Out, Aug. 1) is a member of Mountville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **It's not about the fish**—Eve MacMaster
- **Tenderness leads to torture?**—L. Lamar Nisly

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Native Assembly focuses on unity

Tribes from Canada and the United States attend biennial meeting.

Mennonites representing Native peoples in Canada and the United States gathered July 24-27 in Poarch, Ala., for the seventh biennial Native Assembly. About 400 people attended at least one of the meetings, which included times of worship, seminars, tours, meals and recreation.

Native Assembly, which began in 1994, invites delegates from Native Mennonite Ministries and Native Ministries of Mennonite Church Canada. Tribes represented at this meeting included Arapaho, Aztec, Cherokee, Northern and Southern Cheyenne, Chitimacha, Mowa and Mississippi Choctaw, Cree, Poarch Creek, Crow, Dakota, Houma, Lakota, Metis, Navajo, Ojibway, Point au Chien and Tunica-Biloxi.

A bus brought 34 participants from Canada. Others came from Montana, Oklahoma, Arizona and Mississippi.

A variety of speakers addressed the assembly's theme, "God is one ... we are one!" (Ruth 1:16). Roy Williams, moderator of Mennonite Church USA, recalled the history of European occupation in North America. "In spite of the greed and killing by European colonizers," he said, "the Native peoples were able to accept Jesus and find new life." Now, "those who were once missionized are called to be missionaries."

Howard Jolly, a Cree Indian who serves as pastor of First Nations Missionary Alliance Church in Winnipeg, said that love for God is connected to love for people. Sometimes Natives want to connect their lives to what whites have done to them, he said, but they need to connect their lives to God. "Believing in Jesus means walking the path Jesus laid down," he said.

James Krabill of Mennonite Mission Network called God "a missionary God." He described four ways to be one: crush, coerce, clone, create.

Phil Shenk, a missionary to the Tabasaran people of southern Russia, talked about the destructive effect of Russian vodka on the life and culture of the Tabasaran. He encouraged participants to (1) list all the positive traits of their tribe, (2) list principles of Jesus' redemption and (3) be known as respecting Native cultures.

Nancy Heisey, president of Mennonite World Conference and a professor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., reflected on Matthew 22:34-40, where Jesus names the first commandment as loving God with one's heart, soul and mind. Then he names a second that is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." She referred to experiences in Zimbabwe in 2003 and called on people to pray for the Mennonites in Congo, where elections were held (see page 6).

The assembly included a variety of ceremonies. The first evening session included a "living stones altar" (1 Peter 2:4-5). People brought stones from their homelands and laid them before a cross.

An opening ceremony included a welcome from the host tribe. Then delegates brought gifts and presented them to the Poarch community, and the local tribe presented gifts to the visiting tribes, who each marched into a circle, singing songs to Jesus in their native tongues.

At a Christian Water Ceremony of Blessing later in the week, people brought water from a body of water in their communities and spoke about its significance, then poured it into vases. From there they used an eagle feather to sprinkle water on themselves.

The table at the closing Communion service included a wedding vase, which symbolized our oneness in Christ.

Between times of worship, participants attended talk-story/cultural sessions and seminars on a variety of subjects. The youth and children also met in separate sessions. The children presented a globe bank to Mennonite Mission Network with $35.13 they had raised. Assembly participants also presented school kits to Mennonite Central Committee.—*Gordon Houser*

KIARA
Myron

Gordon Houser

'We are one': Kiara Myron from the Northern Cheyenne community in Busby, Mont., sings as part of the children's activities at Native Assembly.

Racial/ethnic conference draws 260

Leaders celebrate progress in Mennonite Church USA and look to future.

The 260 people who gathered in Dallas Aug. 3-6 for the "From Every Tribe and Nation Racial/ Ethnic People's Conference" love Mennonite Church USA. They also intend to help shape its future.

"This year's assembly is a historic benchmark for this generation," said Kenneth Thompson, a member of the African-American Mennonite Association (AAMA) board of directors. "We're not calling for tolerance [in Mennonite Church USA]; we're calling for togetherness."

We're not calling for tolerance; we're calling for togetherness. —Kenneth Thompson

The three-day event included biennial gatherings for two Mennonite Church USA associate groups: AAMA and Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church). Native peoples held their meeting earlier (see page 19). By bringing the associate groups together, planners created one of the largest gatherings ever of underrepresented racial/ethnic Mennonite Church USA members and their white supporters.

Three times during the sessions Mennonite Church USA moderator Roy Williams reminded the group how far the denomination has come in dismantling racism.

"This is the story," Williams said during the opening worship service. "We have a person of color who is the leader of Mennonite Church USA today. Over the years people have worked hard [to make Mennonite Church USA inclusive], both Anglos and people of color, so that ... we can change Mennonite Church USA together."

However Williams, whose Hindu family was from India but lived in Jamaica, later warned that such progress could easily disappear.

"Together we created the words and documents [naming antiracism as a denominational priority]," Williams said. "But that can easily be taken out. If you let up, it will disappear in two years."

One evidence of progress in relating to Mennonite Church USA was a new arrangement for Hispanic leadership education. During the Iglesia Menonita Hispana business session, Mennonite Education Agency executive director Carlos Romero announced the creation of a new staff position to oversee existing Hispanic leadership programs at Mennonite Church USA colleges, universities and seminaries. The new initiative will also create courses for three levels of training: certificate-level, undergraduate and graduate.

The AAMA gathering also focused on the future.

"As [AAMA] creates black middle-class congregations," said Michael Banks, pastor at King of Glory Tabernacle in Bronx, N.Y., "are we preparing that generation to handle the goods? How are we going to continue to work into our network the issues of nonviolence, peace and justice?"

AAMA moderator Leslie Francisco III noted that those issues were addressed in the youth and young adult programming at each convention.

Banks also challenged the leaders of Mennonite Church USA during a question and answer session with Williams and executive director Jim Schrag. Noting that seminary communities use academic disciplines to help shape the denomination's Anabaptist identity, Banks said that underrepresented groups—with their oral traditions—are often left out of the processes currently forming Mennonite Church USA.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Making 'herstory'

After a moving worship service on Aug. 5 at the racial/ethnic peoples conference in Dallas, many gathered around Juanita Nuñez (right) to pray. They prayed for God's Spirit to be with her and give her guidance, wisdom, courage and a prophetic vision. Hours before, Nuñez made "herstory" when she was nominated by consensus to the position of moderator-elect of the Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church). She is the first woman to be chosen for the highest seat in this Mennonite Church USA associate group.

"I am very excited about the position. The first two years, my focus will be to learn the process. After that I will really go into the position."

Many Native American and African-American members said their impression of Juanita is that she is a spectacular preacher, leader and a wise woman filled with the Holy Spirit.

Samuel Lopez (left) was elected moderator. He has been serving as interim moderator since Byron Pellecer's resignation in 2005 .—*Sarah Thompson*

Anna Groff

Young adults contribute to gathering

Seminar addresses life at Mennonite colleges for racial/ethnic students.

Pannell

What is it like for racial/ethnic students to attend a Mennonite college? During the youth and young adult portion of the "From Every Tribe and Nation Racial/Ethnic People's Conference," (see page 20) Melody Pannell shared examples of how her racial/ethnic peers responded during their time at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

One shied away from all activity and campus life. One rebelled and felt angry most of the time, and one was a "bookworm" and only focused on grades.

"All three of those people were miserable," said Pannell, who is now the director of multicultural services at EMU.

Before she began her college career, Pannell's mentor told her, "You need EMU, but EMU [also] needs you."

So when she enrolled as a student, she took a different route. She decided she would not be a "complainer" on campus. Instead she became involved in all kinds of campus activities and committees, working to make changes to better the college.

"I did all that I could," she said.

About 45 youth and young adults gathered Aug. 5 for the workshop. Pannell encouraged these youth and young adults to attend a Mennonite college and "use your complaints to make a change."

Representatives from Hesston (Kan.) College, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Goshen (Ind.) College also made presentations.

"I'm eyeing EMU down now, " said Chantelle Silverio of Norristown (Pa.) New Life Mennonite Church. Silverio will be a high school senior.

She said she admired Pannell and the way she worked to make a difference in her surroundings at EMU.

Silverio said she heard about EMU through a friend who attends, but most of the information at the workshop was new to her.

Felicia Moore, New Beginnings Community Church, Bristol, Pa., also listened to several of the representatives at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, where she attended last year.

The representatives were "able to be a little more real and not sugarcoat things," Moore said.

Moore said she appreciated how they spoke freely and specifically in that setting.

Moore also responded to the statistics that minority students at Mennonite colleges are increasing.

"To hear that change is coming," she said, "that makes you want to be a part of it."

Moore will enter her second year at Indiana (Pa.) University this fall.

Christian Williams, Nanih Waiya Indian Mennonite Church, Preston, Miss., said the representatives seemed honest about the experiences for racial/ethnic students.

"They wouldn't come out there and lie," he said.

Williams said he is considering a Mennonite college after attending the workshop.—*Anna Groff*

> **To hear that change is coming, that makes you want to be a part of it. —Felicia Moore**

Anna Groff

Young adult voices

Two young adults shared at the closing worship service during the "From Every Tribe and Nation Racial/ Ethnic People's Conference" in Dallas on Aug. 6.

Moises Angustia (left) of United Revival Mennonite Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., said God is preparing the church for multicultural worship, as language and cultures break down. Angustia said the "seed was planted" in his life when he heard church leaders of color speak while he was a student at Eastern Mennonite High School and Eastern Mennonite University. Both schools are in Harrisonburg, Va.

Ben Brickhouse of Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va., spoke about how it is essential that church members support one another. He said the "life of secrecy" that many lead needs to end.

"We really do need each other to survive," he said. Brickhouse is a student at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va., and a founder of the Christian hip-hop group "Proof." He also performed a rap about salvation during the Sunday morning worship service.—*Anna Groff*

Mideast war affects mission programs

Some workers may not be able to return to friends, belongings, ministries.

Nazareth Village

With city buildings looming in the background, a shepherd leads his flock through Nazareth Village, one of the enterprises that is being affected by the missiles traded between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

As Mennonite workers in Israel and Lebanon follow reports of the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon and Hezbollah rocket strikes on Israel, they face the possibility that their ministries could be compromised or even ended.

Just days after the Hezbollah kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers set off the latest round of hostilities, workers from the Middle East met as part of a larger gathering in northern Indiana hosted by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

The workers asked to remain anonymous due to ongoing security concerns.

"So many innocent people are struggling because of Hezbollah and because of Israel," a worker in Lebanon said. "They destroy so many people's lives."

Workers visiting North America from Israel checked cell phones for text messages from friends and family members living in conflict areas. Workers from Lebanon worried for the safety of friends in the southern suburbs of Beirut, which sustained heavy bombing. They also expressed concern for Lebanese co-workers and colleagues with Mennonite Central Committee.

A worker from Lebanon recounted looking forward to an unusually smooth North American ministry assignment, but "in just one week, our lives here have been radically shifted." Without knowing whether they will be able to return to their friends, their belongings and their ministry, the worker continued, "I feel I'm suddenly stranded in the United States."

While the workers in both countries condemned the violence on both sides of the conflict and expressed visible concern for friends, family members and strangers at risk from the hostilities, workers in Israel said they have seen this before.

One Jerusalem worker said residents in and around the Gaza Strip are beyond the range of the rockets currently being used by Hezbollah.

However, tensions between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Hamas group continue to escalate. If suicide bombings begin again, the worker said no one in the region is safe.

Despite the danger, the workers in Israel plan to return, and those assigned to Lebanon hope they too may be allowed to resume their work—if any of it remains after the bombing stops. Some workers also expressed concern that tourism to Nazareth Village—that shows visitors a slice of Jesus' first-century life—will disappear.

A Lebanon worker said hope had begun to return to the land after the end of a 15-year civil war, which ceased in 1990. Lebanese had begun to be introspective about the war, reflecting on its causes and beginning to heal. There had been hope that adversaries could work together.

That hope, the worker said, has crumbled to rubble.

The voices of Christians in the region, especially pacifist Christians, have not been heard, since most outsiders see the conflict as simply Muslims versus Jews, a worker from Israel said.

"The Christians are ignored, even by the president of the United States. At the practical level, they also don't exist," the worker said. Christians, he continued, must move past supporting Israel or hating Israel."—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

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Canadian MBs open pastorate to women

Statement, approved with 77 percent vote, recognizes 'diversity of convictions.'

"The women in ministry leadership motion has passed." With this sentence, Canadian Mennonite Brethren moderator Willy Reimer wrapped up the most critical piece of business at Gathering 2006 July 23 in Calgary, Alta.

It was the piece everyone knew would define the convention as well as the future of Canadian Mennonite Brethren—regardless of how it turned out. The statement approved by the delegates said it would "bless each member church in its own discernment of Scripture, conviction and practice to call and affirm gifted men and women to serve in ministry and pastoral leadership."

This statement marked a significant turn in a decades-long and often torturous slog through the question of women and ministry in the Mennonite Brethren church.

When the results were announced, however, the room remained quiet. Some minutes later, when delegates heard that the motion had passed by 77 percent, a slight collective gasp escaped them. They were undoubtedly expressing what Reimer then said: "I was surprised." (Previous readings had indicated Canadian MBs almost evenly divided on the issue.)

Otherwise, however, the reaction was quietness as before, and the agenda moved quickly, almost casually, to other things, as if the matter had been routine.

The matter was far from routine but the delegation's muted response reflected an understanding that this resolution was, in one person's words, "a motion of respect."

It did not ask Mennonite Brethren to adopt a uniform theological stance on women in ministry leadership.

"It is evident that individuals and congregations practice a diversity of convictions based on different interpretations of Scripture," the resolution said.

It asked instead that diversity of practice be accepted within the denomination on this "non-confessional issue."—*Dora Dueck, associate editor of the* Mennonite Brethren Herald *for Meetinghouse*

Trust/Investment Advisor

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking a trust and investment advisor in the Telford, Pa. office, responsible for investment management and trust and estate administration. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree and prior related experience; knowledge of trust and investment services; Series 65 license (or willing to pursue); willingness to travel.

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Seminary students provide care, counsel

Clinical Pastoral Education program one of only two seminary-based in U.S.

Courtesy photo

Eastern Mennonite Seminary student Jill Gerig visits with Mary Ware Greene, a resident at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community.

While much of America vacations, a half-dozen pastoral ministry students at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., are investing a major portion of their summer in providing care and counseling through the seminary's Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program for people facing illness, spiritual crisis or emotional trauma.

"This is one of only two CPE programs in the United States based in a seminary," CPE director Kenton Derstine says. "Most are based in the pastoral care departments of large hospitals.

"The advantage of a seminary-based CPE program is that it can place students in a variety of settings—not just in hospitals, where CPE programs are typically found—but also in retirement communities, congregations, jails and other sites," Derstine says.

The students this summer are spending time in a local hospital and several area retirement communities. One is also leading a Bible study in the local prison complex.

"Ministry students often live with questions about how they might function if called upon to minister to an individual or family in the crisis of death, trauma or a terminal illness," says Derstine.

Like most students, Jill Gerig is splitting her summer CPE time between a local retirement community and a local hospital.

"I've had to learn how to take the initiative in going in to visit with people I've never met," Gerig says, "just knocking on a hospital room door and asking people if they want to visit."

Gerig is using her CPE experience to fulfill the internship requirement for her master of divinity degree.

"I'm learning how to sit with people when they are in painful situations without falsely reassuring them or moving in quickly to try to make things OK," Gerig says. "I'm learning to be with people wherever they are—emotionally, physically and spiritually."—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

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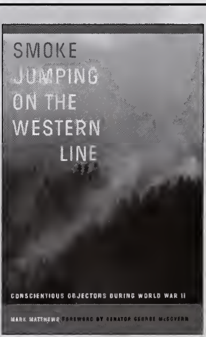
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CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS DURING WORLD WAR II
MARK MATTHEWS FOREWORD BY SENATOR GEORGE McGOVERN

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Sudanese refugees return to their homes

Mennonite Central Committee donates soap, clothing, blankets to thousands.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is donating soap, clothing and blankets to refugees who are returning to southern Sudan after many years of war.

Over the next months, the aid will be distributed to thousands of people who are returning to their home communities after living for years in refugee camps.

The Sudanese civil war caused about 2 million civilian deaths in southern Sudan and drove an additional 4 million people from their homes. The war formally ended with a peace agreement last year, and many southern Sudanese refugees are returning from other regions of Sudan and from camps in neighboring countries.

A geographically separate conflict in western Sudan's Darfur region is continuing, however, causing massive displacement and loss of life. MCC's material aid—including 1,150 boxes of laundry soap, 510 bales of clothing and 19,225 blankets—will assist people like Bianka Nacica, who recently returned from a refugee camp in central Uganda with her four grandchildren.

Nacica says she returned in order to look for her daughters, whom she has not seen in 15 years. Nacica believes they now live in the cities of Juba and Khartoum, but she cannot afford to travel any farther than Ikotos, a small village in Eastern Equatoria.

Rob Haarsager

Bianka Nacica (right), pictured with her granddaughter, returned to southern Sudan after 15 years as a refugee in Uganda.

For now, Nacica and her grandchildren, along with many other returning refugees, must rely on the assistance of others for their basic needs. In time, they hope to reunite with their family and begin their lives again.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

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•fax 574-535-6050

•1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794

CALENDAR

A cappella Festival, Sept. 1-4, **Spruce Lake Retreat**, Canadensis, Pa. This music-filled holiday weekend features nightly concerts ranging in style from traditional to contemporary and all a capella! Concerts will be performed by Garment of Praise (male quartet), Zambian Vocal Group and Durant (young adult ensemble from Nashville whose name derives from a member's grandfather who inspired their Christian walk). Michael Bishop will lead a Saturday morning hymn sing. Located in the Pocono Mts. of northeastern Pennsylvania. For reservations, call 800-822-7505 or email info@sprucelake.org.

Animals Whys comes to **Sunnyside Mennonite Church**. Kids and Cultures (www.KidsAndCultures.com) presents a 45-minute interactive cross-cultural storytelling show featuring pourquoi tales from around the world. Sunnyside Mennonite Church, 337 Circle Ave., Lancaster, Pa., 6:30 p.m., www.sunnysidemc.squarespace.com, 717-397-7344.

Salford (Pa.) Mennonite Church is hosting a ***"Be Not Afraid"*** weekend on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, Sept. 9-10. Salford will be having seminars, conversations with our Muslim neighbors, a Peace Camp for children, Coffee House with Muslim youth and a hymn sing. For more information, call 215-256-0778 or visit www.salfordmc.org.

The Xanga /My Space Generation: Inside the Online World of Teens. Ken Mueller, Center for Parent/Youth Understanding (www.cpyu.org), will present an internet awareness seminar for parents on Oct. 5 at **Sunnyside Mennonite Church**, 337 Circle Ave., Lancaster, Pa., at 7:00 p.m. Visit www.sunnysidemc.squarespace.com or 717-397-7344.

WORKERS

Peachey Rudy, Carolyn, was licensed July 23 toward ordination for her ministry in the Philippines.

Villegas, Isaac, was licensed June 15 toward ordination as pastor at Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bender, Levi Cole Janzen, July 15, to Darrell (Chip) Bender and Wendy Janzen, Waterloo, Ont.

Bixler, Mira Georgeann, June 1, to Jeff and Amy Wenger Bixler, Hudson, Ohio.

Braming, Lily Elizabeth, July 23, to Scott and Stephanie Grieser Braming, Chicago, Ill.

Eklich, Kyle Benjamin, July 17, to Rob and Maria Sommers Eklich, North Canton, Ohio.

Ficklin, Reece Alan and Elena Kate (twins), May 28, to Michael and Analisa Massanari Ficklin, Bellingham, Wash.

Giesbrecht, Isaiah Johann, July 20, to Peter and Tamara Ruth Giesbrecht, Sellersville, Pa.

Good, Cole William, July 15, to Chris and Lindsay Megan Good, Elkhart, Ind.

Grieser, Alex Michael, July 11, to Michael and Rhonda Delp Grieser, Gilbertsville, Pa.

Halteman, Ashley Nicole, July 21, to Andrew and Dea Landis Halteman, Quakertown, Pa.

Haman, Mattison Rachel Lee, July 11, to Eric and Amy Halteman Haman, Gilbertsville, Pa.

Hershberger, Caedon Benjamin, July 12, to Michael and Melissa Weaver Hershberger, Dover, Ohio.

Hood, Kolby Daniel, July 7, to Dan and Megen Wagner Hood, Engadine, Mich.

Lindenmeyer, Sofia Grace, July 24, to Dan and Julie Unruh Lindenmeyer, Wichita, Kan.

Longacre, Zeke Miller, July 18, to Cory and Linda Miller Longacre, Telford, Pa.

Maust, Xayvion Tai, July 20, to Amber Maust, South Bend, Ind.

Stoltzfus, Calla Ellison, July 14, to Todd and Mandi Dagan Stoltzfus, Harrisonburg, Va.

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Walls, Ell Garreth, April 13, to James and Chrissie Weiman Walls, Rochester, N.Y.

MARRIAGES

Ament/Kilheffer: Kelly Ament, Lancaster, Pa., and J. Frederick Kilheffer, East Petersburg, Pa., July 29 at East Petersburg Mennonite Church.

Arp/Miller: Jill Arp, Gladbrook, Iowa, and Randy Miller, Kalona, Iowa, July 15 at Peace United Church of Christ, Gladbrook.

Barthlow/Risser: Jason Barthlow, Lemasters, Pa., and Elizabeth Risser, Greencastle, Pa., July 15 at First Assembly of God, Greencastle.

Benner/Sigmans: Laura Benner, Telford, Pa., and Jesse Sigmans, Blooming Glen, Pa., July 7 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Bontrager/Leinbach: Jonathon Bontrager, Harrisonburg, Va., and Elizabeth Leinbach, North Webster, Ind., June 24 at Camp Azusa, Syracuse, Ind.

Boshart/Miller: Kristi Boshart, Wayland, Iowa, and Jon Miller, Kalona, Iowa, July 1 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Bowerman/Yoder: Rick Bowerman, Milford, Ind., and Carla Yoder, Goshen, Ind., July 2 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Dixon/Klug: Joey Dixon, South Bend, Ind., and Jessica Klug, South Bend, July 15 in Bremen, Ind.

Ganas/Gaugler: Angela Ganas, Philadelphia, Pa., and George Gaugler IV, Telford, Pa., May 28 at St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Philadelphia.

Gascho/Jones: LeAnn Gascho, West Liberty, Ohio, and Reed Jones, Urbana, Ohio, June 24 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Gass/Waltner: Jessica Gass, Brookings, S.D., and Travis Waltner, Freeman, S.D., June 15 at Brookings Wesleyan Church.

Goehring/Kaufman: Lynette Goehring, Lennox, S.D., and Ivan Kaufman, Lennox, S.D., June 17 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Hochstetler/Springer: Ryan Hochstetler, Elkhart, Ind., and Renee Springer, Elkhart, June 17 at the bride's childhood home, Hopedale, Ill.

Holste/Sebes: Jeffrey Holste, Ludell, Kan., and Nancy Sebes, Hanston, Kan., July 15 at United Methodist Church, Atwood, Kan.

Johnson/Stucky: ReBecca (Becca) Johnson, Archbold, Ohio, and Jacob Stucky, Goshen, Ind., June 17 at Reith Recital Hall, Goshen College.

Kaufman/Stamp: Natalie Kaufman, Marion, S.D., and Brian Stamp, Sioux Falls, S.D., June 16 at Hidden Valley Golf Course, Brandon, S.D.

Kurtz/Weaver: Brandon Kurtz, New Holland, Pa., and Sheila Weaver, New Holland, July 8 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

LaBelle/Stauffacher: RaeAnne LaBelle, Minneapolis, Minn., and Lucas Stauffacher, Minneapolis, June 10 at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, St. Paul, Minn.

Landis/Rodriquez: Maria Landis, Harleysville, Pa., and Jesse Rodriquez, Grottoes, Va., July 8 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Liebelt/Penner: Cody Liebelt, Satanta, Kan., and Robyn Penner, Hillsboro, Kan., May 27 at Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, Kan.

Mayen/Stauffer: Todd Mayen, Lakewood, Colo., and Lisa Stauffer, Lakewood, July 15 at Snow Mountain Ranch, Fraser, Colo.

Miller/Ricker: Roslyn Miller, South Bend, Ind., and John Ricker, Elkhart, Ind., July 21 in South Bend.

Miller/Yoder: Heather Miller, Hartville, Ohio, and Derek Yoder, Kokomo, Ind., July 14 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Reminder/Turner: Kathryn Reminder, West Liberty, Ohio, and Darrin Turner, West Liberty, July 8 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Tschetter/Waltner: Kylie Tschetter, Freeman, S.D., and Brandon Waltner, Freeman, June 24 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Werman/Wiens: Yolonda Werman, Goshen, Ind., and Michael Wiens, Goshen, July 15 at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind.

DEATHS

Eberly, Mary A., 90, Lititz, Pa., died July 4. Parents: Amos S. and Mary Nolt Eberly. Funeral: July 8 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Franz, Olga Woelk, 92, Newton, Kan., died July 16. Spouse: Walter W. Franz (deceased). Parents: Peter and Helen Schroeder Woelk. Children: Kenneth, Bette Rhine; four grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 19 at Grace Community Church, Newton.

Johnson, Donald Albert, 85, Warden, Wash., died June 26. Parents: John and Dorothy Fuller Johnson. Funeral: July 23 at Warden Mennonite Church.

Juhnke, Leonard J., 85, Newton, Kan., died July 13. Spouse: Erma Decker Juhnke. Parents: Karl and Katherine Goering Juhnke. Children: Morris, Verona Entz, Shardelle Dirks, Berdene Barta; nine grandchildren. Funeral: July 17 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

President and CEO

Mennonite Mutual Aid's Board of Directors is seeking a President and Chief Executive Officer to lead a multi-line organization that provides insurance, financial services, charitable giving, and fraternal benefits. The leader will forward an MMA vision which springs from a rich Anabaptist tradition of holistic stewardship lifestyles dedicated to honoring God with individual and community gifts rooted in the biblical conviction, "the earth is the Lord's."

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Qualified candidates must possess proven leadership skills, high ethical standards, visionary thinking, balanced risk-taking and creativity, ability to advance and guide team collaboration, and exceptional skills to communicate MMA's distinctive stewardship values and services. Candidates will bring personal stewardship experience and involvement in an Anabaptist denomination and congregation.

See Careers at MMA-online.org for more information.

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Cover letter and resume may be e-mailed or sent to:
Pat Swartzendruber
MMA Board Presidential Succession Committee Chair
1919 Park Rd., Harrisonburg, VA 22802
pswartzen@aol.com.

Kurtz, John M., 95, Westover, Md., died June 21. Spouse: Susie H. Kurtz (deceased). Parents: David and Amelia Mosemann Kurtz. Children: Eugene, Donald, Calvin, Douglas; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 24 at Holly Grove Mennonite Church, Westover.

Lantz, Clifford M., 92, Goshen, Ind., died July 17. Spouse: Mary Jane Blough Lantz. Parents: Melvin and Catherine Yoder Lantz. Children: Susan Jane, Catherine Ellen Miller, Nancy Ann Eggers, Stephen Morrell, John Thomas; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at Reith, Rohrer, Ehret Funeral Home, Goshen.

Leatherman, Cleta A., 74, Souderton, Pa., died June 12. Spouse: Roscoe R. Leatherman. Parents: Harvey and Verda Moyer. Children: Cheryl, Linda, James; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 16 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Miller, Stanley M., 75, Goshen, Ind., died July 6. Spouse: Violet I. Miller. Children: Gregory L., Jacqueline R.; seven grandchildren. Funeral: July 10 at Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, Goshen.

Nelson, Robert E., 77, Hopedale, Ill., died July 21. Spouse: Frances M. Mont Nelson. Child: Dwight E. Funeral: July 24 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Schloneger, Ronald C., 73, Dalton, Ohio, died July 18 of cancer. Spouse: Helena "Pat" Schloneger. Parents: Melvin and Margaret Clark Schloneger. Children: Allan, Craig, Karen Sims, Debra Harder; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 22 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Slabach, Melvin E., 73, Naples, Fla., died July 17. Spouse: Marilyn Litwiller Slabach. Parents: Bill and Edna Miller Slabach. Children: Ron, Ken, Jim; four grandchildren. Funeral: July 29 at Cornerstone United Methodist Church, Naples.

Steiner, Bertha Bontrager, 81, Dalton, Ohio, died May 4 following a brief illness. Spouse: Walter Steiner. Parents: Ernie and Malinda Christner Bontrager. Children: Keith, Marlin, Dan, Carol Nottingham; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 7 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Winesburg, Ohio.

Stoltzfus, Menno S., 86, Lancaster, Pa., died June 22. Spouse: Elma Sands Stoltzfus. Parents: Jonathan and Elsie Blank Stoltzfus. Children: Rose Yost, Glenn, Marvin, Carol Kauffman; 12 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 27 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

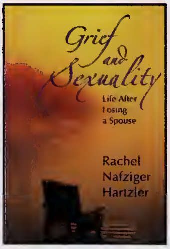
Unruh, Verney L., 83, Newton, Kan., died July 8 due to complications from triple bypass surgery. Spouse: Belva Waltner Unruh. Parents: Anthony and Anna Albrecht Unruh. Children: Judi Mollenkof, Pat Tilton, Barbara Beachey, Paul; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 12 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Warsaw, Howard R., 84, Minier, Ill., died July 20. Spouse: Ruth I. Yates (deceased). Parents: William Herman and Lena Kahlbrumm Warsaw. Children: John, Howard Ralph Jr.; one grandchild; three step-grandchildren; six step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 24 at Davis-Haensel Funeral Home, Minier.

Wilke, Katie Dick, 99, Spokane, Wash., died July 16. Spouse: Herman Wilke (deceased). Funeral: July 21 at Riplinger Funeral Home, Spokane.

Yoder, Norma A., 74, Goshen, Ind., died July 17. Spouse: Dale L. Yoder. Parents: William D. and Frances Brant Phillips. Children: Dale Allen, Todd W.; two grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; five step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 20 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Books to read and share from Herald Press



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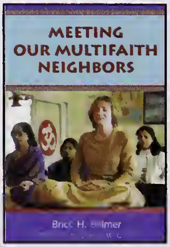

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"Immigrants from around the world are changing the religious and cultural landscape of North America. Brice Balmer's book is a wise, practical, and caring guide for those seeking to relate to their new neighbors. Drawing upon his own experience and the Christian virtues of hospitality and welcoming strangers Balmer's book helps navigate this new reality."—*M. Darrol Bryant, author of* Religion in a New Key
Paper, 150 pages, 0-8361-9339-3: $14.99

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***Chief Executive Officer*: Landis Homes**, a Mennonite retirement community in Lititz, Pa., seeks a new Chief Executive Officer. Preferred candidates will have strong financial acumen, board experience, a clear values-based leadership style and be an active member of a Mennonite church. Send inquiries to: Kirk Stiffney, MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite A, Goshen, IN 46526, fax: 574-534-3254 or email: kirkstiffney@msn.com.

Sharon Mennonite Church, a congregation of 260 in rural central Ohio near Columbus, invites applications for the position of full-time ***youth pastor***. Individual should have a zeal for Christ and passion for youth. Will give oversight primarily to the senior MYF and junior MYF, but also leadership to young adult ministries. Congregational information available upon request. Contact chair of search committee Glenn Hochstetler at 7675 Amity Pike, Plain City, OH 46064 or email sharonmenno@yahoo.com.

Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa., a growing congregation of 250+ adults and 130 children and youth, seeks applicants for a half-time ***associate pastor***. The associate pastor will carry a visible presence in worship, preaching and pastoral ministry. Applications received by Sept. 30 will be given full consideration. Contact the church office at 717-392-7567 or cmcl@mennonite.net. See job description at http://cmcl.pa.us.mennonite.net.

Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., seeks short-term ***volunteer*** (4-6 months) for cabin renovation project. Experience in construction and/or general contracting is necessary to coordinate volunteers as well as subcontractors. Some meals and housing or RV sites are provided. Interested people should contact Justin Weaver, Executive Director, at 269-476-9744 or Justin@friedenswald.org.

Goshen College Department of Sociology/Anthropology and Social Work seeks applicants for a ***tenure-track position in sociology***, an internationally focused major; Ph.D. in sociology required by Fall 2007. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment. Closing date for applications is Oct. 20, 2007.

The newly formed **Fransen Family Foundation** welcomes applications for ***micro-grants*** from 501(c3) organizations. Interested charitable organizations should make application as directed on the foundation's Web site at www.fransenfamilyfoundation.org. All applications must be received by Aug. 31, 2006.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., positions beginning August 2006.

Athletic director to administrate, manage and develop overall vision for athletic programs: cross country, volleyball, soccer, basketball, softball and baseball. Mentor coaches and educate students, parents and staff in a Christian philosophy of sports. Organize scheduling and communication within the Tri-River league. Contact Mike Wenger at mwenger@westernmennoniteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

High school English teacher with an Anabaptist faith perspective to lead respective departments. Contact Darrel Camp at dcamp@westernmennoniteschool.org or call 866-343-9378.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students locally and from various states and countries. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

***Associate pastor of youth and worship*: Oak Grove Mennonite Church**, a growing, vibrant church of approximately 275 attendees in rural West Liberty, Ohio, is seeking a full-time associate pastor. Primary responsibilities will be to pastor the youth and assist the congregation in providing creative and meaningful worship experiences. Please contact Search Committee Chairman Larry Steider at lsteider@earthlink.net or 937-465-3183.

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Goshen College exists to pass on to a new generation the grand and glorious biblical values and Scriptural truths of people called Anabaptists. I believe the core values of Goshen College: being Christ-centered passionate learners, servant leaders, compassionate peacemakers and global citizens are revolutionary in scope today as were the values of our fore parents in faith and practice. These values, backed by a powerful Strategic Plan of action for Goshen College, and not ours to hold on to so much as ours to share. These values are much bigger than we are and are capable of influencing whole cultures, like leaven.

James E Brenneman

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'Ghetto tax' and generosity

Gordon Houser

The Bible is full of references to the poor and needy. God is called their refuge, protector, deliverer, helper and provider. God commands Israel to care for the poor, the widow, orphan and stranger. Some have said the best measure of a society's health is its treatment of the neediest members.

Given all this, U.S. society—not to mention the rest of the world—is not a pretty sight. Despite being the wealthiest nation on earth, we have many citizens who live in poverty.

Now a study from the Brookings Institution offers us good news and bad news. The bad news is that the urban poor not only have less but actually pay more for various services and items. The good news is that said finding ways to eliminate these added costs, often called a "ghetto tax," could be an important new front in the fight against poverty.

Here are two examples from the study of such a tax, as reported July 18 in the *New York Times*:

"Drivers from low-income neighborhoods of New York, Hartford and Baltimore, insuring identical cars and with the same driving records as those from middle-class neighborhoods, paid $400 more on average for a year's insurance.

"The poor are also the main customers for appliances and furniture at "rent to own" stores, where payments are stretched out at very high interest rates; in Wisconsin, a $200 television can end up costing $700."

The study shows that poor urban residents often pay hundreds if not thousands of dollars a year in extra costs for everyday necessities. Some of the disparities are due to real differences in the cost of doing business in poor areas, some to predatory financial practices and some to consumer ignorance.

Officials from three states—New York, Pennsylvania and Washington—have said they are working through a variety of programs to draw banks to poor neighborhoods, help finance the construction of supermarkets and encourage innovative insurance schemes.

"Measures that reduced the price of essential goods and services for low-income Americans by just 1 percent would put an additional $6.5 billion a year in their hands," said the report, titled "From Poverty, Opportunity."

These are large numbers and a large problem. But what can we do?

One possibility is supporting organizations such as Mennonite Economic Development Associates, which helps small businesses with loans and training.

Another may be to learn from our Native sisters and brothers about generosity. I attended the biennial Native Assembly last month (see my report on page 19), where I witnessed the Native custom of gift-giving.

At the opening ceremony and throughout the assembly, people exchanged gifts. Tribal representatives brought gifts to the host Creek tribe, and they in turn gave gifts to their guests. Each gift was a beautiful handmade item that represented hours of careful work. (For one example, see the photo on page 7.)

Most Native people are not especially wealthy, yet a key part of their identity is giving gifts and showing hospitality. I certainly have much to learn from them, and I suspect others among us do as well.

As we read the Scriptures and look around us, we need to let God's Spirit lead us to share with those in need. In doing so we obey our Lord and help create a healthier society. TM

FILMS

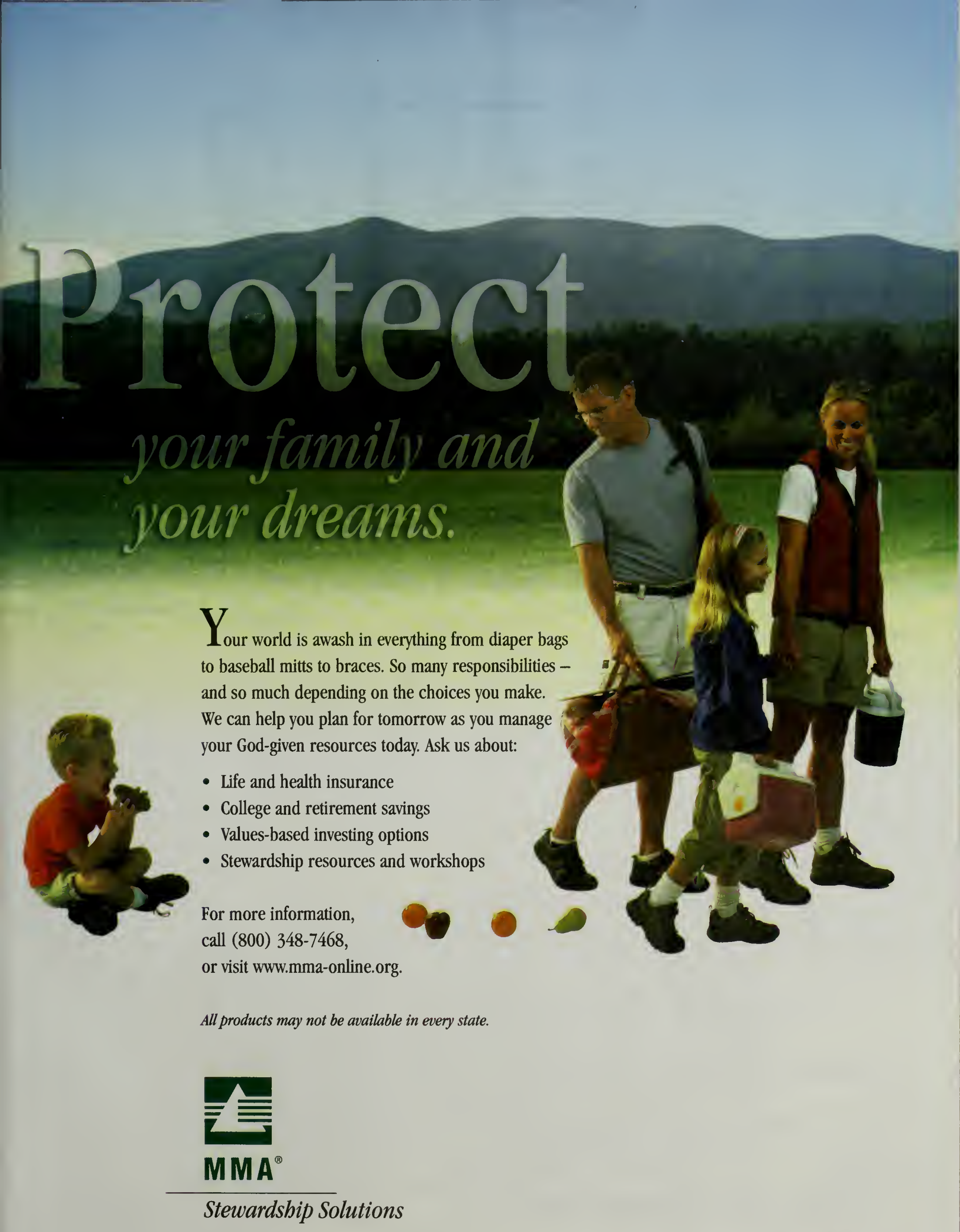
Water (PG-13) is set in India in 1938 during Mahatma Gandhi's rise to power. The story centers on 8-year-old Chuyia, who is widowed (yes, widowed) and sent to a home (ashram) where Hindu widows are forced to live a life of penance. The film is beautifully shot and well-acted. Religion is a predominant concern, and the film's criticism of Hindu's caste system and treatment of women will seem obvious to Western viewers, though Hindu nationalists do not like it. Director Deepa Mehta had to suspend filming at one point because of death threats. This is the third film in Mehta's trilogy *Earth*, *Fire* and *Water*.

A Scanner Darkly (R) is a futuristic satire and cautionary tale about drug use. Based on a novel by Philip K. Dick, whose tales often deal with cognitive dissonance and alternative realities, this film uses an animation technique called rotoscoping to show the shadowy paranoia of drug abuse. Though confusing at times, the film has some funny moments. But in the end it shows the disorientation and destruction wrought by drugs. Director Richard Linklater is a master of dialogue and is willing to deal with philosophical issues.

BOOKS

Rethinking Holy Land: A Study in Salvation Geography by Marlin Jeschke (Herald Press, 2005, $16.99) offers a new perspective on the Middle East dispute over territory by presenting "the biblical paradigm of how to possess land." Though we tend to ignore it, "land" occurs 2,504 times in the Old Testament. Jeschke writes that "from at least the time of Abraham to the present hour God has been trying to coach humanity toward a new way of possessing territory other than the way of seizing it by conquest and then defending it by violence and force."

Presenting Sunday Dinner: A Collaborative Approach to Worship and Preaching by June Alliman Yoder, Marlene Kropf and Rebecca Slough (Herald Press, 2005, $18.99) uses the metaphor of worship as a feast that requires collaboration to prepare. This rich book combines theological reasons for worship with practical suggestions for improving the worship experience. The authors write, "We need to be equipped with a sound biblical theology and vision of worship that provide a dependable framework for planning and leading worship faithful to the God who invites it."



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Everett J. Thomas

Reservoir of trust

Like thousands of others across the church, the generous givers we feature in this issue offer tithes to their congregations and contributions to church institutions they trust. Fortunately, most Mennonite Church USA agencies and institutions enjoy the confidence of their constituents. But this trust reservoir must constantly be replenished. The best way to do that is to be as transparent as possible with financial information.

But getting complete financial information from Mennonite Church USA agencies and schools is a laborious process. It takes too long, and the information provided voluntarily is often incomplete. Furthermore, we occasionally have to dig through the "spin" in news releases to find the bottom line.

Most Mennonite Church USA program boards ended their fiscal years on Jan. 31. But only in the past month have audited financial statements been released—and then only after we formally requested copies. Here's what we found.

The Executive Board is hurting: It concluded its third year of operations with another deficit. The aggregate loss for the past three years is $816,976—about 25 percent of the buying power it had in 2002 (see "Executive Board Faces Another Deficit," July 18).

Mennonite Church USA agencies and schools enjoy the confidence of their constituents. But this reservoir of trust must constantly be replenished.

Mennonite Mission Network, on the other hand, ended its fiscal year on Jan. 31 with income about the same as the previous year and ended with a small increase in net assets from operations. Total revenue was $11,195,242, while expenses were $11,188,897. But when adjusted for inflation and the rising cost of health insurance, this flat line represents a decline in buying power.

Financial information about Mennonite Publishing Network was confusing. Here's what a May 17 release from Mennonite Church USA's communications office said about MPN:

"A clean, unqualified audit showed a break-even year on a cash basis. Publishing revenue included $185,000 in donations. ...Total costs included $615,000 in debt payments for principal and interest—financed in large part from ongoing operations. Over the past four years, the long-term debt has been reduced from $5.1 million to $3 million."

While it is wonderful to see MPN paying off its long-term debt on schedule, the statement is misleading. According to audited financial statements released in July, MPN ended its fiscal year with a $54,077 decrease in net worth. MPN's financial statement also revealed another trend: declining sales through the Provident Bookstores chain (the "cash cow" for paying off the debt). In the last fiscal year, Provident Bookstores sales were down about $1 million, while operating expenses for the stores were down only $400,000.

Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Church USA colleges, universities and seminaries all ended their fiscal years on June 30. If we have the same trouble getting their financial statements this year as we did last year, it will be December until we can report on the total picture for our denomination's largest enterprise. That is because audited statements are not released until after their respective boards accept them.

In the meantime, we are tantalized with partial news favorable to the institutions. Bluffton (Ohio) University, Goshen (Ind.) College, Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., recently sent releases noting that contributions were up from previous-year amounts (see page 6).

It is understandable why these institutions release partial information; it shows that their programs are supported by constituents. But it does not put the information in the context of each institution's overall financial viability. For example, EMU and Bluffton seem to be signaling that they had excellent years financially. AMBS, on the other hand, had to reduce its staff and seems to have had a difficult year. We won't know for sure until halfway through the next school year.

The trust reservoir is full; trusting the church with both good and bad news will keep it full.—*ejt*

Note: The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated Sept. 5, 2006.

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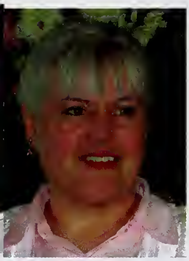
Passing on the faith—and responsibility



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

In the last days, God said, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.—Acts 2:17 NLT

I have been noticing something lately that gives me great pleasure. I noticed it in the days leading up to our biennial assembly in Charlotte. It was present at Charlotte. I have been seeing it at work at the conference level. It is there at the congregational level as well. I've been noticing an active interest in the workings of the church by our youth and young adults.

In different ways, youth and young adults are telling us they have opinions about the way we are being church together. They are making it known they want to enter discussions and they care about the direction the church is headed. They are asking how and where they can enter the life of the church. This is good news.

In other settings, I have listened to older adults grapple with these same issues. Some seek to squelch these fresh voices as immature or idealistic. Others, clinging to changes they may have helped orchestrate, stand in opposition to further change encouraged by anyone else. Still others may desire to empower these younger ones but struggle to know how to do so.

In their book *Christian Life Patterns*, Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead speak to this issue. They operate from the premise that developmental stages don't stop with adolescence and the teen years but continue through adulthood. The adult who ages gracefully and healthily is one who moves from taking on adult responsibilities to becoming a person who encourages the next generation to take on these responsibilities and mentors them into these roles. They write: "The challenge of mature generativity is to trust in the generational process, for certainly the next generation will alter what we hand on to them. … The Spirit is with us from generation to generation; no individual need function as sole controller and guarantor of this transition." They go on to say that those who cannot let go of control to trust the next generation in carrying the faith forward deprive not only the next generation but themselves as they miss out on their own next stage of development.

God's Spirit is at work: In a perfect world, younger adults will seek to learn from the wisdom of older adults, even as they begin to take on the responsibilities of an adult in the church. Older adults will teach and encourage younger adults, even as they let go of their responsibilities. All generations will trust that God's Spirit is at work in the process, and they will be willing to learn from one another.

In the book of Joel and again in the book of Acts, we have a picture painted for us of God's Spirit at work within all God's people. God's Spirit is not sprinkled or dripped upon people but liberally poured out upon everyone, regardless of gender or age. What a picture of gracious abundance and generosity!

And what a picture of being countercultural! In a day and age when women were considered of less value than men, God's treatment of women is exactly the same as God's treatment of men. In cultures that silence youth until they've reached a respectable age, God's way of doing things is to enable youth to see as God sees. In our own culture, which caters to the young and the beautiful, God's methods are to give the gift of inspired dreams to the old.

God must place great value on people to give us such a wonderful gift in God's Spirit, displayed through prophecies, visions and dreams. Can we do any less than value one another and respect the gifts God gives through one another?

TheMennonite

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Vol. 9, No. 17, September 5, 2006

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.Goshen, IN 46526

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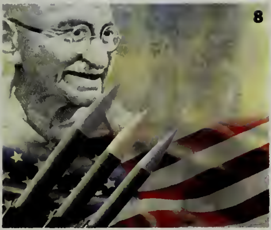
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Cover: Photo by Ray Dirks. For more information see "In this issue" on page 4.

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

No hybrid religion

The article "A Sacrament and a Song" (Aug. 1) is Katherine Donnelly's personal testimony of faith. That testimony is owned by the individual and certainly deserves respect and consideration. My response to reading this article is mixed because of the overwhelming amount of theology that is just barely touched or not presented at all. My response is also mixed because I do not understand "hybrid" religion.

The sacramental approach to Roman Catholic worship in the Mass is core to the celebration. The Eucharist or Holy Communion or Breaking of Bread is celebrated as part of every full Mass. The Roman Catholic Church teaches the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the host and the wine (the doctrine of transubstantiation). This is not Mennonite teaching.

The deletion of any mention of the sacrament of baptism interested me. The Roman Church instructs all parents and couples in premarital instruction that "children are to be raised in the Catholic faith and baptized as infants." This is not believer's baptism. It is not a teaching of the Mennonite church.

In praying the rosary, the participant repeatedly says, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." This is not Mennonite teaching.

The presumption that a Mennonite sister "needed" the rosary leads me to ask, Why? The presence of many "external" signs of faith in the Catholic church reverts back centuries to Christian Judaic tradition and a time when the congregation was mostly illiterate and needed sensory instruction. The use of expensive external symbols of faith inside a Catholic Church is in opposition to a life of simplicity.

Since we are all mortal and death is inevitable, I wonder about a faith that is double-minded. This is not in any way meant as an admonition to the author of this article. Many Catholics attend various Protestant churches and are sometimes called "picnic Catholics." The priest is called in an emergency. Why not the Mennonite pastor?

My experience with music in the Mennonite church is that the music is a witness to love and salvation through the gift of God's Son Jesus Christ. I have never been in a Mennonite church where this music witness was not supported by the entire congregation.

I ponder the thought of hybrid religion. What exactly is this? I do not understand. Perhaps hybrids are best left to roses and cars.—*Mary Ann Templeton, Castalia, Ohio*

House churches or synagogues?

I have carefully read the article about churches in private homes ("Evangelism and the Church in Your House," Aug. 1). The first Christians developed it as an effective way, and with Paul's influence they developed it to its maximum group expression. But we remember that the Savior used the synagogue as a reference for his sermon, and Paul engineered it to change the favorite place of the teacher.

If our Anabaptist-Mennonite church leans toward this model, it must remember to structure a liturgy that is respected by all and that shares the same faith. Besides, the work of theological education would multiply in direct relation to the quantity of houses dedicated to this ministry. One has to be careful of the basic Anabaptist biblical principles and remember that we were persecuted just as much by Reformers as by Catholics for practicing a radical gospel.—*Miguel Pamies, Macquarie Fields, Australia*

Editor's note: Miguel Pamies' letter was written in Castilian Spanish; this is a translation.

Confession of faith is just right

Reading the July 4 article ("Confession of Faith Is Nearly 11 Years Old") about the June 8-10 consultation to assess how the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective has served the church, I was struck by the range of expectations of a confession of faith document. Apparently some envision such a document as "timeless," while others consider that it should address—with some measure of specificity—issues of the day such as megachurches, terrorism and urbanization. While

IN THIS ISSUE

After participating in Congo's election, Ray Dirks sent the cover photo with the caption, "A teenage girl pauses to contemplate on the path outside the Manenga Mennonite Church." Because Mennonite Church USA is developing a church-to-church relationship with two of the three Congolese conferences, we made Dirks' photo essay (pages 22-23) our cover story. But this issue also covers two other important events: the Sept. 11, 2001, bombings and the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's destruction. Chaiwat-Satha-Ananda reminds us of another 9/11: the one a century ago that launched the Indian nonviolent movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1906 (pages 8-10). To mark the Hurricane Katrina anniversary, assistant editor Anna Groff (pages 24-25) reveals some of the issues confronting leaders of Gulf States Mennonite Conference and the ongoing struggle by the broader Mennonite church to help in sensitive ways.—*Editor* acknowledging room for improvement, I think the 1995 document struck a good balance. It served me in just the way such a document should serve the Mennonite church: It articulated the faith that this church has nurtured in me over time.

When I applied for missionary service with Eastern Mennonite Missions, I received a copy of this document to review and to assist me with a daunting doctrinal questionnaire. I remember reading through the confession and rejoicing to see that, "Yes, this is what I believe. This says it just right. This is the Christian faith that drives me."—*Holly Blosser Yoder, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

Building decisions in light of needs

Many times when I hear of or see the amount of money the church is putting into buildings I think of a story Clarence Jordan told years ago: A certain town had approximately 100 poor families who lived in slum conditions. A church of that town decided to build a new building. The money this one congregation spent could have built a new house for each of the 100 families. Here was a ready-made, concrete opportunity to express the love of Christ. Instead they spent it for themselves on a building used by a limited number of people for a limited number of hours per week.

Before consuming more on ourselves, should we not look around our community and world and make sure we make our decision in light of these crying needs?—*John M. Drescher, Quakertown, Pa.*

Honor brothers of Abraham

Violence in the Middle East is fueled not only by oil but by religious fears, longings and superstitions that result from tragic misinterpretation of Genesis 12:1-3, where God blesses Abram. Abraham's three spiritual children—Jews, Christians and Muslims—seem forever intent on claiming the blessing exclusively for themselves and on treating the other two as competitors and enemies to be cast out. Abraham and his God weep.

Two corrections could change human history and save us from continuing the tragedy: (1) The word "nation" can be interpreted either as "goy," which means geopolitical nation-states, or an "am," which means a people, a tribe, a community of faith. One is political, military, economic sovereignty; the other is a spiritual community whose sovereign is God. The difference in human history is unfathomable. (2) The Bible consistently uses naming, calling and chosenness in connection with a mission and purpose for the whole world, for all nations. The human tragedy compounds when Abram's children connect their calling instead to favor and privilege.

I want to honor my two brothers in the bosom of Abraham and discover with them a God beyond our fears, superstitions and violence. I want to learn with them our mutual summons to be taken, blessed, broken, given to each other and for saving the world.—*Walter S. Friesen, Hesston, Kan.*

Leaders who give in other ways

After reflecting on the stories by Dan Hess (Aug. 15), as well as what I wrote, it seemed that primary recognition was given to those who have been able to monetarily support the denominational structures. I wonder how that felt to the 200 or so pastors and church leaders who participated in the multiracial conference in Dallas reported in the same issue. Many pastors of Hispanic, African-American, Native and Asian, as well as Anglo urban and rural churches, give countless hours without pay and travel many miles without reimbursement to engage in the work of their congregations and beyond. I wish just one story had been included that recognized their invaluable contribution to the church. (After all, the church is much more than its structures, agencies and institutions.) That would have reflected a more holistic approach to stewardship, including time and talents as well as money.—*Miriam Martin, Atlantic Coast Conference minister/administrator*

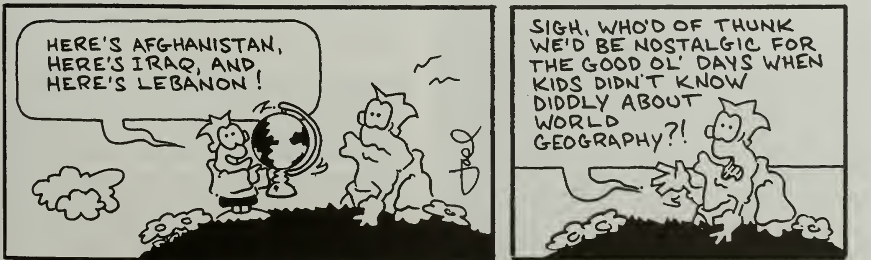
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

To help with the recovery after Hurricane Katrina, I: (61 votes)

- ○ sent money (39%)
- ○ volunteered my time (10%)
- ○ prayed for the victims (21%)
- ○ all of the above (13%)
- ○ none of the above (16%)

Check out the new poll question at www. TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


HERE'S AFGHANISTAN, HERE'S IRAQ, AND HERE'S LEBANON!
Joel
SIGH, WHO'D OF THUNK WE'D BE NOSTALGIC FOR THE GOOD OL' DAYS WHEN KIDS DIDN'T KNOW DIDDLY ABOUT WORLD GEOGRAPHY?!

IN BRIEF

Paraguay's First Lady to address MEDA convention

María Gloria Penayo de Duarte, First Lady of the Republic of Paraguay, will be a keynote speaker at the annual Business as a Calling convention of Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Nov. 2-5 in Tampa, Fla. The convention is the most visible public event of MEDA, a 2,500-member organization whose dual thrust is to encourage a holistic Christian witness in business and to devise business-oriented solutions to poverty. Duarte, a founding member of the Raíces Mennonite Brethren Church in Asunción, will share a dynamic testimony of how her Christian faith informs her public role.—*MEDA*

Women in prison

According to a report from the Institute on Women and Criminal Justice, African-American women, who comprise 12 percent of the U.S. female population, make up more than half of women in prison. And 96,125 women were serving state or federal prison sentences at the end of 2004, almost nine times the number in 1977.—*Sojourners*

MCC assesses needs of returnees to Lebanon

AKRON, Pa.—Despite massive damage to roads, buildings and bridges, thousands of Lebanese displaced by the war are returning to their homes and communities in southern Lebanon.

In partnership with Lebanese organizations, Mennonite Central Committee is assessing the needs of the people returning to homes that have been damaged or destroyed, says Willie Reimer, director of MCC's Food, Disaster and Material Resources department.

The initial assessment is carried out by MCC's local staff member, Bassam Chamoun, whose home was damaged in early August when the town of Ansar in southern Lebanon was the target of an Israeli air attack.

In addition to basic survival needs, people directly affected by the conflict are dealing with fear, sorrow and despair created by the deaths and injuries of thousands of civilians, says Reimer.

A report from the Middle East Council of Churches, a member of the global alliance Action by Churches Together and a long-standing MCC partner, states that the death toll in Lebanon resulting from the 34-day conflict has risen to 1,250 people. About 300 people are still missing, and about 4,500 are wounded.

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Friends help couple pay off health-care debt

Girls from Law's Mennonite Church in Harrington, Del., help build a spec house for Bill and Louise DiGennaro of Rolla, Mo., after they incurred a health-care debt of $28,000. Organized by the couple's children, the project brought in a profit of $30,000 after the house sold last November. Bill promptly wrote a check to pay the hospital bill.—*Debbi DiGennaro*

About 1 million people were displaced in Lebanon, many living in temporary shelters, while others found refuge in neighboring countries.

The BBC reports that the conflict claimed the lives of 114 Israeli soldiers and 43 civilians. Human Rights Watch reports 500,000 Israelis displaced.

MCC's emergency response in Lebanon and Gaza is currently $166,000.—*MCC*

CPT accompanies human rights lawyers

COLOMBIA—During the week of July 21-26, Christian Peacemaker Teams workers Noah Dillard and Kim Lamberty accompanied a delegation of five human rights lawyers and representatives from other Bogotá organizations on a mission to isolated farming communities in rural Montes de Maria, a region near Colombia's north coast.

The delegation notified the communities of their rights under Colombian law and collected their complaints of violations of these rights committed by the Colombian armed forces in the area. The delegation then submitted the list of complaints to the military and civilian authorities in a meeting held at the end of the visit. The lawyers also plan to process the complaints through the Colombian legal system.

The delegation held public meetings at five separate campesino communities; representatives of at least 20 other communities were present.

Campesinos complained of four types of violations: (1) military blockades and roadblocks preventing free movement and transport of needed food and medical supplies in and out of the communities; (2) massive and arbitrary detentions of community members without due process; (3) crop fumigations that target avocado trees, the main agricultural product of the area; (4) the government supplying funds for the military presence in the area but not for other state services like electricity, clean water, health clinics, schools or road repair.

Civil and military officials denied the allegations.—*CPT*

Canadian-U.S. gathering may occur in 2008

EDMONTON, Alta.—At Mennonite Church Canada's annual assembly, Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary of Support Services, "informed delegates of a tentative proposal for a joint MC Canada/Mennonite Church USA gathering in July 2008 in Winnipeg for shared worship, study and fellowship," according to *Canadian Mennonite.*

Courtesy photo

ffing bombs or books?

sident Bush's visit to Lancaster County, Pa., Aug. 16 threat- d to close the major fundraising event of the Lancaster nnonite Historical Society, its annual Bookworm Frolic used k sale. Secret Service agents informed director Beth ybill the day before the President's visit that the Society in the bomb threat area nearby where the Presidential copter was landing and would need to shut down for six rs during the first day of the sale, potentially a $20,000 of revenue. After some negotiation, LMHS was allowed to ain open, though traffic was blocked for several hours in afternoon. Said Graybill, "This is the first time in the sale's year history that bomb-sniffing dogs have searched our d books" (see photo). Many visitors came early in the day n later days, and the event raised $39,000 for the Society's seum, library and archives. LMHS is the largest grassroots nnonite historical society in the country.—*Beth E. Graybill*

Ron Byler, associate executive director of Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, says he expects this topic to be on the agenda of the Joint Executive Committee in November.

The event, if it takes place, will likely be held alongside a Mennonite Church Canada delegate assembly but not a Mennonite Church USA delegate assembly, Peters-Pries said.—*Gordon Houser*

Mennonite faculty discuss wisdom of cross

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Seeking to more fully incorporate faith in the classroom, faculty members from U.S. and Canadian Mennonite higher education institutions gathered Aug. 8-10 at Bluffton University for the third Mennonite University Faculty Conference, providing an opportunity for faculty members and deans of sister institutions to explore what it means to be Mennonite within the world of higher education.

Participating faculty members and deans from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.; Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.; Bluffton (Ohio) University, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Winnipeg; Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.; Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and Goshen (Ind.) College attended and shared thoughts on "Higher Learning and the Wisdom of the Cross," the conference theme, based on 1 Corinthians 1-2.

Sponsored by Mennonite Education Agency and the Marpeck Fund, the conference included keynote addresses by Gordon Zerbe, vice president and academic dean at CMU, and Susan Biesecker-Mast, associate professor of communication at Bluffton. Janeen Bertsche Johnson, campus pastor at AMBS, led worship.—*Bluffton University*

Prison theater program involves inmates

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—For the second time in less than six months, John McCabe-Juhnke, Bethel College professor of communication arts, directed a play with the U.S. penal system as an important theme or subtheme. What was probably most different about the two plays was his cast.

In April, McCabe-Juhnke directed Bethel students in a production of "Dead Man Walking," using a script adapted by Tim Robbins from the movie screenplay. On July 15, McCabe-Juhnke had eight inmates—seven cast and one crew—at the Hutchinson Correctional Facility who staged the dark comedy "T Bone N Weasel" by Jon Klein.

The event was the latest installment of the Prison Arts Project, coordinated by the Newton-based Offender Victim Ministries. "T Bone N Weasel" is about two ex-cons traveling in a stolen car through the backwoods of South Carolina. Faced with racial and class-based stigmas, the main characters T Bone and Weasel at nearly every turn run into people who try to take advantage of them.

The theater component of the Prison Arts Project consists of seven-week workshops that allow inmates at Hutchinson to learn fundamentals of stage production and to act in a full-length play. They perform once for the other prisoners and once for the public.—*Bethel College*

Broomball puts 'fun' into fund-raising

LANSDALE, Pa.—The new game of broomball was introduced to the Christopher Dock Mennonite High School community as a way of putting "fun" into fund-raising. More than 20 teams of students, faculty and staff participated in a broomball tournament May 26 as part of the all-school social to raise funds for the Grebel Hall building project. The event raised $127,690.

The school community tithed on the amount raised by students, faculty and staff, which meant that $3,269 was sent to Mennonite Central Committee, earmarked for the Darfur relief efforts.—*Christopher Dock Mennonite High School*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

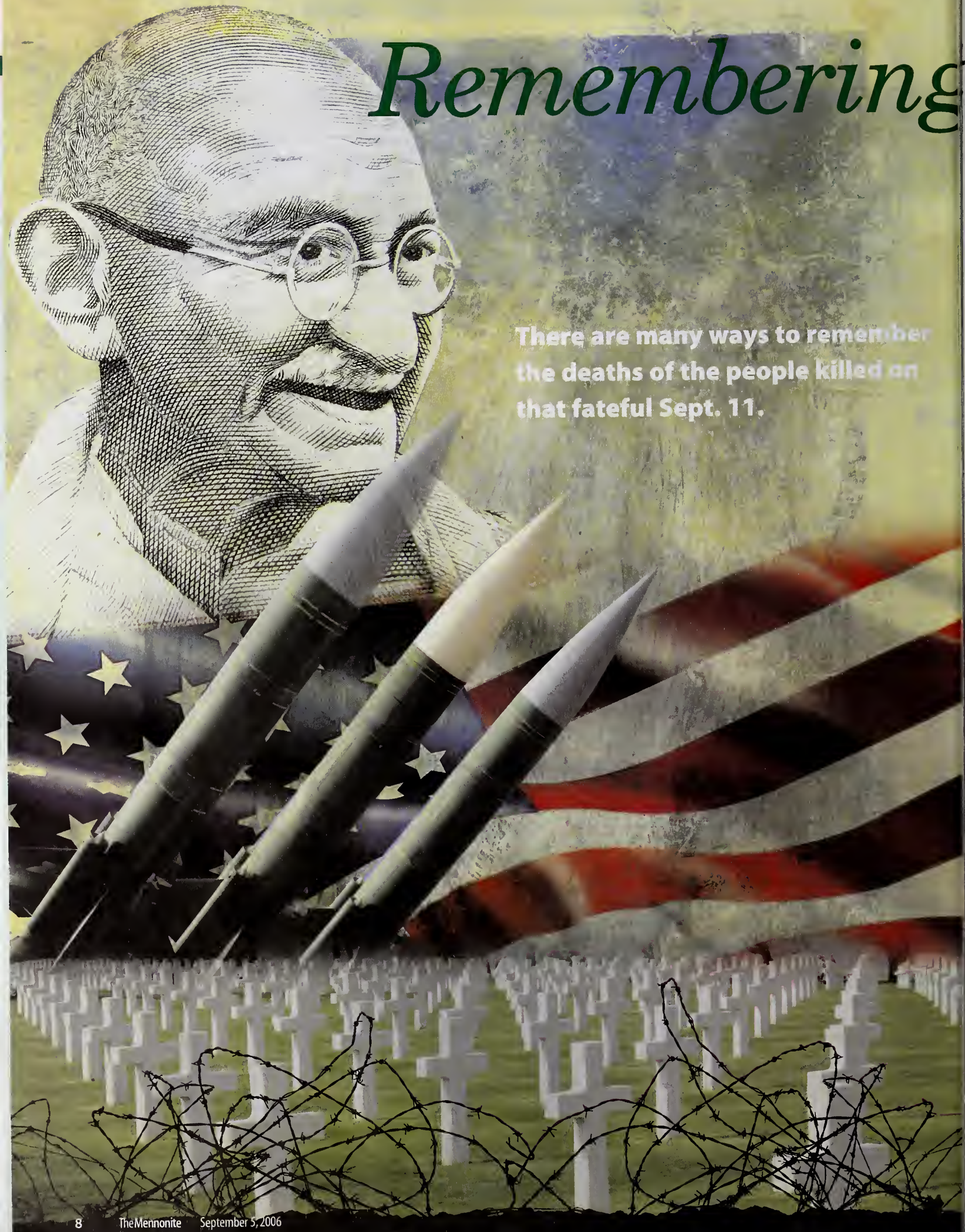
Moltmann wins theology world cup

German Protestant theologian Jürgen Moltmann was declared the greatest theologian of the 20th century in the finals of the Systematic Theology World Cup, conducted on the Internet while the world's top soccer tournament was being played in Germany. "Moltmann's relevance for his age, as well as his impact on church and academia, was considered more significant," said Finnish theologian Patrik Hagman, who staged the four-week contest. The final pitted Moltmann against Swiss Roman Catholic Hans Urs von Balthasar. The contest was decided by visitors to the Internet site, who were asked to rate the two finalists on five criteria linked to creativity, relevance, permanence and impact on the church and on the academic world. Other semifinalists were Catholic Karl Rahner and U.S. Lutheran Robert W. Jenson.—*The Christian Century*

Hindsight on oil

Barrels of oil the U.S. consumes each day: 20 million. Barrels of oil the U.S. would have saved in 2006 alone if, starting in 2001, the government had implemented plans to raise fuel economy standards to 40 mpg by 2012: 500,000. Amount consumers would save at the gas pump this year: $8.7 billion. Tons by which carbon dioxide emissions would be reduced: 34 million.—*Yes!*

Remembering



There are many ways to remember the deaths of the people killed on that fateful Sept. 11.

he nonviolent 9/11

On Sept. 11, 1906, Gandhi's nonviolent movement was born.

by Chaiwat Satha-Anand

On Sept. 11, 2001, 19 men turned four commercial airplanes with passengers into weapons of terror attacking cities in the US, killing more than 3,000 people. "That crystal blue morning," Craig R. Whitney writes in the introduction to The 9/11 Investigation (2004), "changed the world, shocking the United States into realizing that it had been drawn into a global war with brutal suddenness." The United States attacked Afghanistan to root out the "Islamic fundamentalist Taliban regime" and then went into Iraq to depose Saddam Hussein, claiming that his regime possessed weapons of mass destruction, among other things. The Taliban were ousted, Saddam Hussein arrested, and no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq, yet "the larger war and the terrorist threat to the American homeland continued unabated." In a way, all this is because at the time of the horrible attack, the United States was—and continues to be—"led by a president persuaded that the United States had no choice but to strike at the terrorist evil before it struck again," Whitney writes.

There are many ways to remember the deaths of the people killed on that fateful Sept. 11. They could be remembered with between 3,125 and 3,620 Afghan civilians killed in the first 10 months of the war in Afghanistan, which began on Oct. 7, 2001. Or they could be remembered with the 2,083 soldiers from different countries, 1,887 of them Americans, who sacrificed their lives in the Iraq war from March 2003 until Jan. 31, 2005. They could also be remembered with 24,865 civilians who had died since the Iraq war began. Among these, 37 percent, or 9,200, were killed by American soldiers, while 9 percent, or 2,237, were killed by the insurgents, according to the UK-based Iraq Body Count Group (*The Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 5, 2005).

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This movement went on to free 300 million people from the power of the British Empire and gave the 20th century a most remarkable demonstration of the power of nonviolent struggle.

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Another way to remember the fates of those who have fallen victim to violence, civilians and soldiers alike, is to refuse to be led by the desperate belief that the world had no choice but to sink deeper into the violent inferno in its attempt to put an end to violence. To honor the memory of those who were killed on 9/11 and because of 9/11, it is important to free the world from a sense of manufactured despair by remembering another 9/11, which took place 100 years ago with an enormously powerful legacy that has changed the world through nonviolence in the direction of furthering freedom.

Nonviolent 9/11: On Aug. 22, 1906, the Transvaal government in South Africa under the British Empire gave notice of a new legislation requiring all Indians, Arabs and Turks to register with the government. Fingerprints and identification marks on the person's body were to be recorded in order to obtain a certificate of registration. Those who failed to register could be fined, sent to prison or deported. Even children had to be brought to the Registrar for their fingerprint impressions. At the time, there were less than 100,000 Indians in South Africa. In Transvaal, there was an Indian lawyer working with a Muslim company whose name was Mohandas K. Gandhi.

On Sept. 11, 1906, Gandhi called a mass meeting of some 3,000 Transvaal Indians to find ways to resist the Registration Act. He felt the act was the embodiment of "hatred of Indians" and if accepted would "spell absolute ruin for the Indians in South Africa." Therefore, resisting it is a "question of life and death."

Among these 3,000 people attending the meeting was one Sheth haji Habib, an old Muslim resident of South Africa. Deeply moved after listening to Gandhi's speech, Sheth Habib said to the congregation that the Indians had to pass this resolution with God as witness and could never yield a cowardly submission to such a degrading legislation. Gandhi wrote in his *Satyagraha in Africa* (1928) that "he then went on solemnly to declare in the name of God that he would never submit to that law and advised all present to do likewise." Though Sheth Habib was known to be a man of temper, his action on Sept. 11 was significant because of his decision to act in defiance of an unjust law and willingness to suffer the consequences in a spiritually endowed fight for justice in the name of God.

Gandhi was taken aback by the Muslim's suggestion. He wrote: "I did not come to the meeting with a view to getting the resolution passed in that manner, which redounds to the credit of Sheth haji Habib, as well as it lays a burden of responsibility upon him. I tender my congratulations to him. I deeply appreciate his suggestion, but if you adopt it, you too will share his responsibility."

On that day, Sept. 11, 1906, in South Africa, the Indian nonviolent movement was born. Gandhi later called his Indian movement "Satyagraha," or "the force that is born of truth and love or nonviolence." This movement went on to free 300 million people from the power of the British Empire and gave the 20th century a most remarkable demonstration of the power of nonviolent struggle.

Remembering nonviolent 9/11: But what does it mean, 100 years later, to "remember Sept. 11, 1906"?

I would say it means remembering that a nonviolent alternative was born in a people's fight against injustice. It means remembering that for Gandhi, it is Truth Force that both binds people together and energizes them in their course of struggle against the mighty empire. That is why invoking God as witness in this case reflects the degree to which a person is willing to sacrifice his or her all for "Truth" or God. It also means remembering the Muslim role in fostering such an alternative at the advent of Satyagraha, or Gandhi's nonviolence.

Most importantly perhaps, "remembering Sept. 11, 1906," means that people can choose to reconstitute themselves as members of a community of memory where once ordinary people decided to do something extraordinary by freeing themselves from despair and changing their world with nonviolence.

Chaiwat Satha-Anand is on the faculty of political science at Thammasat University, is vice president, of the Strategic Nonviolence Committee of the National Security Council and is a member of the National Reconciliation Commission.

First egg

by Michael Martin

It was a dog, we thought,
that breached the walls of the chicken coop,
hurtling young hens in all directions.
Later we found them crouched
among wild raspberry canes
and cowering under squash blossoms.
Then finally three
stretched out on their sides,
whose unmarred iridescent feathers
belied their broken backs.

Such cruel waste, I think,
when nature rules more by instinct
and less by grace.
All the world shudders
before earth's spreading death.
And we look for and cling
to the smallest of things,
striving to save
the last of our faith.
The one child pulled alive
from a ruined city's dregs.
Or the nesting box
where we find
the year's first egg.

Michael Martin lives in Greencastle, Pa.

It's not about

Reflections on the Book of Jonah

by Eve MacMaster

The central paradox of the Christian life is that just when we begin to believe God loves us, something inside us wants to think this is not because God is love but because we are lovable. The more religious we are, the better our outward behavior, the nicer we become and we easily come to believe that what God wants from us is our niceness, our goodness. Then, being nice people, content in our niceness, we have no need to go farther with God.

Paul Stewart, a friend of ours who is working in East Africa, wrote: "Faith is more than assent to a set of intellectual precepts and doctrines or the careful observation of rites and rituals; faith is a living fellowship, a relationship with the power of the Holy Spirit. To be a Christian is not to get your life straightened out and be a good person. To be a Christian demands that we 'walk in the light' with believers about our faith and our struggles in Christ. If we are not free to share our struggles with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we become the Hypocrisy Enabling Society in which we all attempt to demonstrate (through our righteousness) that we are all just fine. We are, in fact, all struggling, and if we wear the facade of sanctification, how can we help each other?"

Mennonites have an especially hard time. We like to identify ourselves as good, peace-loving Anabaptists. But it's dangerous to identify ourselves and our faith community with those who bring peace—the danger of identifying ourselves with goodness and our enemies with evil.

I think of how the rhetoric proclaimed after 9/11 called the United States to a crusade against Islamic terrorism and how this resonated with many religious people, who identified themselves with goodness and the enemies of the state with evil.

And that brings us to one of the strangest books in the Bible: Jonah.

The story is not about a whale. It's a parable about a disobedient prophet. It's a humorous story, a satire that reveals the failure of a good person. Read it carefully and you'll find a series of comic exaggerations—animals wearing sackcloth, a city that takes three days to walk across, a man surviving for three days inside the belly of a fish, and a prophet who runs away from the presence of the Lord. Think Jon Stewart and the Daily Show, a correspondent interviewing Jonah: "The Word of the Lord came to you and you did what?"

The Book of Jonah was probably written during the time of the return from exile, when the Jews felt their survival depended on maintaining strong boundaries of ritual purity.

Anabaptists have a history of this kind of thing, of striving for purity and ending up with legalism.

Photo illustration: Dee Birkey

the fish

Anabaptists have a history of this kind of thing, of striving for purity and ending up with legalism.

The call of Jonah follows the pattern of a story about the prophet Jeremiah, who called Judah to repent before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. Jeremiah urged his people to fast and pray, but the king and nobles refused and even burned the scroll containing Jeremiah's warnings.

Jonah can be read as an allegory of the people of Judah, who were swallowed into exile because they didn't obey the word of the Lord but were brought back to the land, only to fall into narrow nationalism and legalism.

Jonah wasn't sent to speak God's word to his own people but to the enemies of God's people, who responded as God had wanted his people to respond.

Nineveh was infamous in the ancient world for its evil, and Jonah, good pious man that he was, despised evildoers. He hated them and their evil more than he loved God and God's goodness. He wanted evildoers to die, not to be saved. He wanted them to be punished, not converted.

The story of Jonah is a parable for all of us who take righteousness seriously, because this parody of prophecy takes our temptations seriously. To Jonah, the Ninevites are so unrighteous, they don't deserve God's grace. But God has different ideas, and the Ninevites repent. Jonah never does. He never even recognizes his need to repent. He's like the Pharisees who gave Jesus so much trouble—and like many Christians.

On the surface, this is a parable about God's grace, but that's not the main point of the story. Jonah assumes God's grace and mercy: That's why I hurried to flee to Tarshish, he says. I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, who changes your mind about punishment.

The plot of the parable is the conflict between God's grace and Jonah's refusal of that grace—first for the Ninevites but ultimately for himself. Despite God's repeated attempts to bring Jonah to repentance, Jonah refuses to see that his self-righteousness is a sin as gross as the Ninevites' idolatry and violence.

First, God calls Jonah to bring a message of repentance to those he despises. Jonah won't even go to Nineveh. He rushes off in a ship, going as far as he can in the opposite direction.

God gives Jonah a second chance when he rescues him from the belly of the fish. But even the miraculous rescue doesn't turn Jonah around. He goes to Nineveh grudgingly, and to his horror God changes his mind about punishing Nineveh—literally, God "repents from doing evil" to Nineveh. Despite God's excellent teaching technique of modeling repentance, Jonah refuses to learn. So God tries an object lesson with the "show and tell" of the plant, but at the end of the story Jonah is still unrepentant.

When we don't have compassion for others, we're also lacking compassion for our own humanity.

At the center of the story is Jonah's prayer from inside the belly of the fish. It sounds pious, with phrases from the Psalms, but it reveals Jonah's complete lack of self-awareness. He condemns idolators, unaware that he is making an idol of his own aversion to idolatry. "Those who worship vain idols abandon their true loyalty," he says, not realizing that what he describes is what he has done by running away from his God. Jonah's self-righteousness blinds him to his own sin.

His prayer is like the prayer of the self-righteous Pharisee in Jesus' parable. The strategy of telling a story about a self-righteous prophet who doesn't repent is like the strategy of Jesus telling parables: to bring those who hear the story to repentance by helping them recognize their own self-righteous attitudes and behavior.

Jonah's aversion to the idolatry of the Ninevites leads him to idolize his own attitude toward them.

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The greatest problem for the church today, the greatest sin, is our division, dividing the body of Christ, failing to love one another.

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He has no room in his heart for the compassion of God. He would rather die than see God act mercifully. He's the opposite of Job, who challenges God with the problem of why the innocent suffer. Jonah is angry because the guilty are not being punished. He can't see that God can be against sin while having compassion on sinners.

When we don't have compassion for others, we're also lacking compassion for our own humanity. When we condemn others, we condemn ourselves. Jonah is angry about the salvation of the Ninevites—the salvation he himself proclaimed in his prayer.

Jonah refuses to acknowledge his common humanity with the Ninevites. Psychologists have a term for what we do when we condemn in others what exists in ourselves: projection. When we do that, we are actually condemning ourselves, so Jonah says, It's better for me to die than to live.

Jonah struggled with God. He wanted God to save him, but he didn't want God to save his enemies. God had a different plan.

God still has a different plan. God calls us, as he called Jonah, to imitate the one who is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, even for the enemy.

Charles Marsh, a professor of religion at the University of Virginia and an evangelical Christian, wrote in the *New York Times* (Jan. 20) a compelling column titled "Wayward Christian Soldiers" that speaks to the Jonah in us.

In the past several years, writes Marsh, American evangelicals have amassed greater political power than at any time in our history. But at what cost to our witness and the integrity of our message? From the fall of 2002 through the spring of 2003 many of the most respected voices in American evangelical circles blessed President Bush's war plans, paying little attention to Christian moral teaching or the sentiments expressed in the Lausanne Covenant of 1974. More than 2,300 evangelical leaders from 150 countries signed that statement, the most significant milestone in the movement's history. The signatories affirmed the global character of the church of Jesus Christ and the belief that "the church is the community of God's people rather than an institution and must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system or human ideology."

John Stott, an Anglican priest and leader of the Lausanne initiative, told Marsh: "Privately, in the days preceding the invasion, I had hoped that no action would be taken without United Nations authorization. I believed then and now that the American and British governments erred in proceeding without United Nations approval." Stott said the Christian community's primary mission must be "to hunger for righteousness, pursue peace, forbear revenge, love enemies, in other words, be marked by the cross."

Marsh's conclusion sounds like a commentary on the Book of Jonah: "What will it take for evangelicals in the United States to recognize our mistaken loyalty? We have increasingly isolated ourselves from the shared faith of the global church, and there is no denying that our Faustian bargain for access and power has undermined the credibility of our moral and evangelistic witness in the world. The Hebrew prophets might call us to repentance, but repentance is a tough demand for a people utterly convinced of their righteousness."

And lest I end on a note that sounds like self-righteous condemnation of other Christians, I will add that for those of us who prayed and petitioned and marched for peace before and after the war began, the temptation may be to admire ourselves for our peace position and not have compassion on those who disagree.

The fact is, the greatest division in the church today is not between Catholics and Protestants or between Lutherans and Mennonites. The greatest division is within traditional denominations, and that division is the greatest threat to our witness.

The greatest problem for the church today is not abortion or antiabortion, homosexuality or homophobia, warmaking or terrorism.

The greatest problem, the greatest sin, is our division, dividing the body of Christ, failing to love one another. How can we witness Christ's peace to the world if we don't love one another, even those with whom we disagree?

In the words of the old hymn, "In Christ there is no East or West," and there must be no liberal or conservative, no left or right, but one great fellowship of love.

Eve MacMaster is pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Gainesville, Fla. This article is adapted from a sermon she preached there on Jan. 22.

Corrections: The photo on page 14 of the July 4 issue is by Twila Miller. Tim Schultz (Aug. 15, page 16) is youth pastor at Clarence Center-Akron (N.Y.) Mennonite Church.

Mixing good and bad fruit

Mennonites are losing their commitment to Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.

by Kenton Glick

My kingdom is not of this world. If it were not so, my followers would fight to prevent my arrest.—Jesus

Two thousand years ago Jesus brought a revolutionary message: instead of revenge you should offer forgiveness. Little children and the poor and outcast of society have just as much worth as the rich and powerful. Even evil people can love their friends, but we show that we are of God when we love even those who do evil to us. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:43-45).

Jesus clearly articulated his belief system of nonviolence, moral standards and love as being separate from all earthly political and religious systems. But powerful evangelical leaders are moving the American church away from this Jesus and toward the politics of revenge and nation building. They say the words of Jesus, despite the fact that he is the divine Son of God, are impractical and do not need to be followed; they say American Christians should put their allegiance to their country before Jesus' teachings; they say to support the most powerful military machine in history, no matter what. If Christians patriotically focus their support on the cultural, economic and political health of America, then God will bless us.

The focus of the evangelical message is clear—it is not on a kingdom separate from earthly rule but on political and economic rulers they desperately believe will restore godly values so the prosperity and health of America, and "American values," can be assured in the world. This is viewed as so important that all negative reports about these rulers are automatically rejected as "slander by the enemies of Christianity."

Anabaptist Christians historically have given prominence to the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. But there is a growing sense of unease about how that distinctive value is significantly changing today. A prominent leader in a Mennonite conference told me: "I have become appalled at the number of members that have bought the militaristic 'God Bless America' attitudes so prevalent in American Evangelicalism. I just met with someone who shared his growing belief that Mennonites are out of touch with their values of nonviolence. We may be at the end of a 'last chance' to articulate a value that is fast disappearing."

The "true evangelical faith" that Menno Simons spoke of is facing a critical test that will determine its future. Will the Mennonite church stand up and prophetically articulate a strong, unabashedly biblical call to stand against this dangerous cultural shift? If we do not, will Mennonites slowly be subsumed by a rising tide of "God and country" religion?

The "true evangelical faith" that Menno Simons spoke of is facing a critical test that will determine its future.

The early Anabaptists were not afraid to take a clear stance against the unbiblical outlook of the church of its day, even if it was unpopular. Maybe it's time we reclaimed that heritage.

Kenton Glick at www.religiousquestion.blogspot.com has created a blog laying out a biblical testimony for nonviolence. He attends DOVE Fellowship in Ephrata, Pa.

Tenderness leads to torture?

When tenderness is detached from the source of tenderness, its logical outcome is terror. It ends in forced labor camps and in the fumes of the gas chamber. —Flannery O'Connor

In the past several years we have all read horrifying reports of prisoner abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison. More recently we have learned of a string of secret prisons run by Americans; in some ways, the silence surrounding what is going on in these prisons is as frightening as the images out of Abu Ghraib.

Americans' responses to these revelations have been puzzling. Certainly we initially heard voices raised in protest of the abuses, but the Bush Administration seems to have successfully shifted our attention away from the abuses with the assurance that wrongs were committed merely by "a few bad apples." And the response to the secret prison revelation seems to have centered at least as much on finding the leaker of information as on determining what has been happening in these prisons. I remain puzzled: Where is the outrage? Where are the patriotic Americans demanding (with Senator John McCain) an end to any torture by any Americans anywhere, since such activities go against American values?

Because my primary field of study is contemporary Catholic literature, my mind has turned, in response to these current events, to an enigmatic statement used both by Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy, both prominent Catholic authors of the late 20th century. Almost against her will, O'Connor was drawn into working with Dominican sisters as they wrote about an amazing cancer-stricken girl for whom they had cared. In her introduction to *A Memoir of Mary Ann*, O'Connor writes of the loss of faith in the populace: "In the absence of this faith now, we govern by tenderness. It is a tenderness which, long since cut off from the person of Christ, is wrapped in theory. When tenderness is detached from the source of tenderness, its logical outcome is terror. It ends in forced labor camps and in the fumes of the gas chamber."

In Walker Percy's final novel, *The Thanatos Syndrome*, the crazy yet truth-saying priest preaches a sermon, proclaiming in part: "Beware, tender hearts! Don't you know where tenderness leads? To the gas chambers. Never in the history of the world have there been so many civilized, tenderhearted souls as have lived in this century. Never in the history of the world have so many people been killed. More people have been killed in this century by tenderhearted souls than by cruel barbarians in all other centuries put together. My brothers, let me tell you where tenderness leads. To the gas chambers! On with the jets!"

Percy's contention that he did not realize O'Connor was the source for his addled priest's oration may strain our credulity. Nevertheless, that

Might it be that we Americans have lost our way amid our concern and fear for the safety of our loved ones and thus forgotten that the prisoner on whom we might justify torture is also another human being?

these two major 20th-century Catholic writers each make this connection between tenderness and the gas chambers seems to insist that we ponder seriously this claim. Given the contexts of these statements, O'Connor and Percy seem at least in part to be attacking a culture in which individuals or governments can determine whether an unwanted or diseased life is worthwhile, whether a fetus should be aborted, whether an ill person should go on living.

Yet by drawing a linkage to the past century's most commonly known atrocity, the Holocaust, O'Connor and Percy seem also to broaden their critique of tenderness. In particular, O'Connor's comment provides clarity when she enunciates the core of our ills as deriving from tenderness detached from its source—Christ. When tenderness or care or compassion becomes separated from the love of Christ, it is in danger of becoming narrow, sectarian, inward focused.

For without Christ's command constantly in our ears to love our enemies, to recognize the dignity and worth of all people, our tenderness can too quickly become focused only on ourselves and our families. O'Connor and Percy suggest that even a good such as tenderness can be perverted when it is removed from its basis in God's love for all. Is it too much of a stretch to suggest that the Bush Administration's reluctance to accept an outright ban on torture is really an instance of misplaced tenderness? Might it be that we Americans have lost our way amid our concern and fear for the safety of our loved ones and thus forgotten that the prisoner on whom we might justify torture is also another human being? Has our tenderness for those close to us caused us to lose sight of the common humanity of one far away?

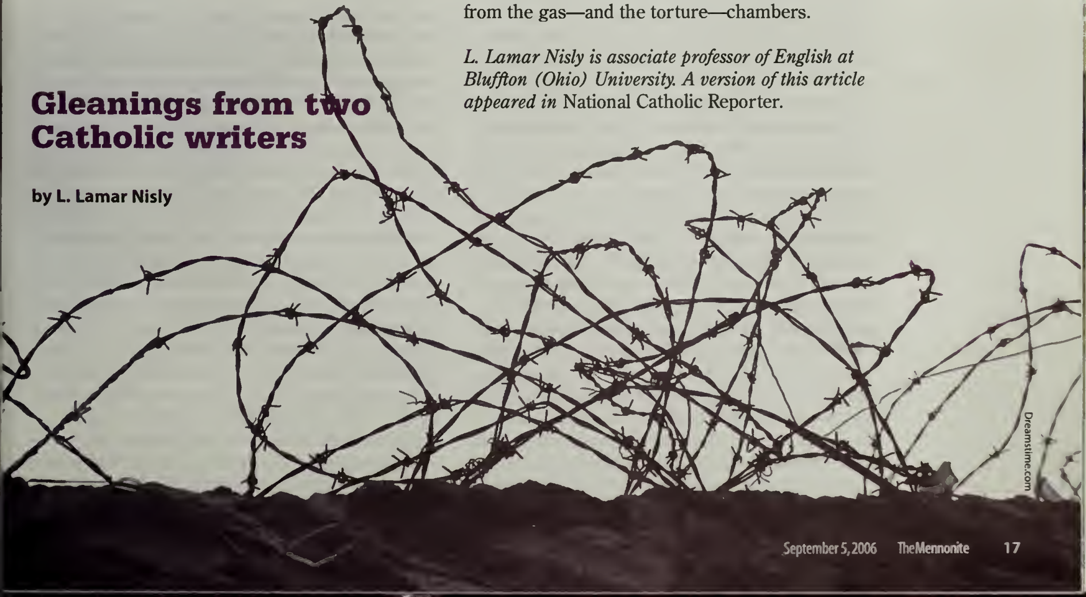
To push these questions further still, might the motivation of kidnappers in Iraq, kidnappers who held four Christian Peacemaker Teams members and killed one, Tom Fox, be also a warped sense of tenderness? Might not their concern for the safety and well-being of their families have led them to decide that they should also devalue the humanity of another by kidnapping (and murdering) these peace activists?

In contrast to this limited view of tenderness, Pope John XXIII writes in *Peace on Earth*: "The person who errs is always and above all a human being, and he retains in every case his dignity as a human being; and he must be always regarded and treated in accordance with that lofty dignity." Such an assertion grows from a tenderness, a compassion that remains attached to its source in Christ, a source who teaches the humanity of all. When we ground our tenderness, our concern for our family and friends, in the rich and expansive love of Christ, O'Connor and Percy tell us that we will steer away from the gas—and the torture—chambers.

L. Lamar Nisly is associate professor of English at Bluffton (Ohio) University. A version of this article appeared in National Catholic Reporter.

Gleanings from two Catholic writers

by L. Lamar Nisly



Dreamstime.com

In which direction

After his study of the Gospels, the 19th-century rationalist Renan wrote, "Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God, and all he got was the church." Today there are more than 2 billion professed Christians in more than 33,000 denominations of many sizes, structures, doctrines and pieties. How does one discern the way of Christ in the midst of what appears to be confusion at its worst?

The Holy Spirit is not given as an inner "spiritual" pocket isolated from the real presence of the kingdom of God amid the social, economic and political realities of human existence.

The church is neither an accident nor a detour. Jesus taught those who followed his call and anointed them as a community to be a living witness in the world of the kingdom of God he had proclaimed and embodied as the Messiah, the Spirit-Anointed One. The Holy Spirit made the coming kingdom of God present in their assembly.

The church's Spirit-empowered, obedient faith in the Messiah shaped the life of the church and demonstrated to the world something of Christ's coming kingdom. She was not to be spared the impact of the world's sin, selfishness, divisions, rebellions, violence, wars, earthquakes, floods and famines but persevere as the Messiah's intended sign and presence of that hope.

Among those who repent and follow Jesus' call and covenant with him, his Holy Spirit of love and compassion embodies grace and peace, truth and righteousness, justice and mercy in restored congregational and individual lives. And wherever these are sent, scattered and planted by him, they freely work at living out that life of the kingdom. As they follow the Messiah and receive his Spirit, together they seek to obey his teaching and emulate his example, at whatever cost, in the service of the world, in many different places and ways. This is the normal messianic "way" of salvation.

But is this true today of all those 33,000 denominations and their many congregations? Is this really true of us in Mennonite World Conference and its nearly 200 denominations, with their 1.3 million members in 65 countries?

When we today claim identity and some kind of continuity with the 16th-century Anabaptists, we are appealing to this original renewal pattern of a faithful messianic people, just as they did. That pattern of renewal has re-emerged in movements again and again during the 50-plus generations since Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God.

Nearly 2,000 years later, students of such movements and churches point out what appear with time to be almost predictable developments away from that intended, normal pattern of messianic community. Wherever the gospel of Christ is preached, we can now discern in history three other major directional pulls.

Besides the normal "messianic" pattern is what one might call "spiritualist/religious." Since the ultimate fulfillment of the kingdom of God has not yet come, there must have been a misunderstanding. Jesus was apparently not speaking about a real human kingdom, effecting material, social, political and economic concerns, with their human relationships and responsibilities. Rather, the major concern of the gospel is for the individual, inner, spiritual reality of the soul, with its ultimate prospects of a future, spiritual afterlife. The most important preoccupation of this orientation is that of personal certainty about the "spiritual" destiny of the soul going up to that future, spiritual kingdom. In this perspective, Jesus is the church's spiritual answer that the real world cannot give, even though it sets the rules for social, political and economic life in which one is born to thrive and prosper.

However, in the Gospels, this was not the dominant concern of Jesus' ministry. The Messiah's preoccupation is with heaven's love, grace and

As a 21st-century American Mennonite, what is the dominant way your congregational and denominational itinerary is moving?

4 directions toward which churches may be pulled

are we moving?

by David A. Shank

peace coming down and becoming embodied now in the real material, social, political and economic world of his committed disciples, since that is the salvation God seeks for the whole world.

The Holy Spirit is not given as an inner "spiritual" pocket isolated from the real presence of the kingdom of God amid the social, economic and political realities of human existence. The Spirit is given rather in view of the embodiment of the life of the kingdom already now in human bodies, families and church communities with their real social, economic and political interactions.

The Messiah's people seek to reorder their whole life—religious, economic, political and social—under the inspiration of the Spirit given by the Messiah to his followers. But that is not easy, in the face of the pressures and pulls of the powers of the world seeking to make those areas autonomous vis-à-vis Christ's reign and the kingdom of God.

In contrast to that orientation is another direction one might describe as "theocratic/political." When the kingdom of God promised by Jesus doesn't come as anticipated, there may develop a sharply contrasting concern to pressure the whole human community to live the life of the kingdom, despite itself. If believers could only get a hold of power—economic, social, political—they could help impose the laws of God's kingdom on those who don't see the Messiah's call as "good news." Since the latter do not know what is best for them, they may even be blessed by being obliged—through civil constraint—to follow kingdom law despite themselves. But does this not ignore the first rule of kingdom life. This calls for a free, loving response to the love of Christ, where the only constraints are God's love and judgment, to which witness is given through the life and ministry of the messianic community and its Spirit-inspired preferences.

Finally, there is a third alternative reading of the relationship of the kingdom of God and the world, which openly submits to and promotes the work of the dominant worldly powers as they neutralize the call of Christ. It makes for a cultural Christianity that thrives on human self-fulfillment and success. It tends to replace the call for repentance and the good news of the kingdom with success and prosperity, seen to be the blessing of God; whatever promotes these is seen to be "good news." Whatever spirit enables that will be seen as "Christian." **We can describe it as a path of "cultural blessing/success."**

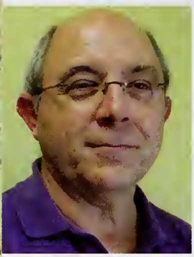
Those 33,000 denominations are all a part of a universal messianic movement that names Jesus the Messiah, and all are subject to these pulls and their effects, but each tends to be moving dominantly in one of these directions. All four directions appeal to Jesus but with different understandings of him and his work. Each of the four is here described in ways that probably no person, congregation or denomination fulfills, even though they represent clear accents. But all the 33,000 "in the world" are subjected to those four different pulls. Each is largely either consciously on the way, as a sign of the kingdom, or unconsciously headed in one or the other three directions as they are pulled by the world's spiritual powers.

And there are strong pulls coming from each of those three other directions as well as the Word and the Spirit. In virtue of those pulls, the direction may indeed change at any time—personally, congregationally, denominationally—either in response to any of those pulls of the world or to that of Messiah and the coming kingdom. When the latter happens, it may be seen as a messianic resurgence, as was the historical movement of 16th-century Anabaptism. And one can just expect that to happen where the Word and the Spirit of God are at work.

As a 21st-century American Mennonite, what is the dominant way your congregational and denominational itinerary is moving? It's worth giving some thought.

David A. Shank is a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, Ind., a retired missionary with Mennonite Board of Missions (Belgium/Cote d'Ivoire) and answers [difficult] questions for Third Way Café.

How can Mennonites support war?



Duane Beachey and Gloria, his wife, are co-program coordinators of Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes, Appalachia Office, in Whitesuburg, Ky.

According to an editorial in *The Mennonite* (April 18), a good number of Mennonites support the war in Iraq, even though as Mennonites they wouldn't believe in fighting personally. How have we come to this? It certainly isn't our historical position. Anabaptists during the 1500s did not support war against the Turks of the Ottoman Empire that were threatening Europe and had conquered parts of it. These Muslims had actual armies and more power than Muslim terrorists today. Yet Anabaptists gave no support for European countries to defeat the Turks.

In a democratic society, the government represents the wishes of the governed. If we the governed declare our support for a war to defeat evil but are personally opposed to fighting because of our faith, there is a serious disconnect between our faith and our logic. This may be borrowed from faith traditions that separate personal from national behavior. Jesus' words don't apply in the national sphere. We don't find the way of Jesus effective or practical in the "real world." To survive, our country must do things we would never do as individuals. Jesus never suggests such a split.

The disconnect in our faith and action may be borrowed from other streams that try to distinguish which wars are just but rarely find any wars in their time unjust. Other Christians defend war based on logic but not on one word of Jesus. They believe if we don't fight evil men, evil will take over. Other Christians recognize war as evil but necessary. So they compromise Jesus' words and accept God's grace to forgive. Probably most influential on our disconnected thinking is the spirit of this age at work both within and outside the Christian community. Here the logic is simply that you do whatever it takes to defend the nation and its interests.

Mennonites probably do not consciously borrow from any of these streams but listen to Christian radio and TV, which is dominated by conservative voices. They hear the plan of salvation and an emphasis on Christ as Lord. Those voices strengthen their personal Christian lives. If they trust the spiritual words they hear, do they also adopt the political views? Based on Romans 13, American conservatives usually give their full support to whatever war the country is waging. The logic is circular. We elect people to represent us who wage war, then say we must support our leaders. Paul says, "Be subject to," and Peter adds, "even those who are evil." Neither suggests supporting their evil.

Conservative voices call for spending more on weapons. The prophets, Jesus and the epistles warn against neglecting the poor. Yet conservative voices usually call for spending less on the poor and taxing the wealthy less. This is the agenda of the wealthiest and most powerful. Shouldn't those two major unbiblical priorities—more for war, less for the poor—make Mennonites more skeptical of a conservative agenda, even if that agenda supports high personal morals? I am gratified that some conservative evangelical voices, such as Rick Warren, are beginning to see poverty and the environment as Christian concerns.

We need to get beyond blind support of conservative or liberal agendas and work together for a biblical agenda, both within the Mennonite church and to the wider culture. We should consistently work for peace and support the powerless. For example, it's inconsistent to proclaim our church pro-life but not seek legislation to protect the unborn, saying we can't impose our morals on others. Good legislation always imposes some morality on the culture—values we believe our country should live by. We needn't support every piece of pro-life legislation offered, but we shouldn't rule out working for better solutions than unregulated abortions and no legal protections for the unborn.

It's inconsistent to believe we should be peacemakers yet support war as a means of solving our country's conflicts. As the Iraq War tragically shows us again, war doesn't work out so well even as a practical matter. As followers of Christ, will we choose the sword or the cross to confront evil? Jesus says, "Those who use the sword will die by the sword." Can we choose a sword for our government, to secure our freedom to worship Jesus, who tells us to put it away? He has gone the way of the cross before us—but also the way of resurrection, which assures us of the final outcome. We needn't be so fearful to walk in his way and call everyone, including the rulers of this age, to accept the kingdom of God as the way for all creation. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Where are we going?**—Robb Davis
- **Who are the troublemakers?**—Jane Yoder-Short

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Greg Ebersole

Hesston duo takes music to war area

Brown, Rodgers perform before 10,000 in Uganda, dedicate new school.

Tony Brown (holding papers) and Ken Rodgers (center) prepare to perform for thousands in Kitgum, Uganda. Anywar Ricky Richard (in white shirt to the right of Rodgers) founded the Friends of Orphans group that hosted the two Hesston (Kan.) College faculty members.

The music Tony Brown and his accompanist heard while in northern Uganda in June reminded them of the spirituals Brown, a baritone, sang in that country and elsewhere. Brown, Hesston (Kan.) College artist-in-residence, and Ken Rodgers, a member of the college's music faculty, spent a week in war-torn areas of northern Uganda at the invitation of a local group, Friends of Orphans (FRO).

"We were the first people Friends of Orphans had taken to the war areas of the north," Brown says. "The people responded well to our music and the spoken word."

In a big park in Kitgum, an estimated 10,000 people, some who walked long distances, attended a long afternoon program. The people included those still living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. As the featured guest, Brown led the crowd in the singing of several spirituals. He also offered words of hope and encouragement, commenting on their struggles as victims of war.

"We are one humanity, and your pain is our pain," he told the crowd. "We will take what we have learned back to the United States and tell your story."

In Pader, where FRO is based, Brown and Rodgers experienced a five-hour ceremony that included graduation for 21 child mothers (former abductees) who had been trained at the FRO's vocational training center for nine months in sewing and tailoring. Each received a sewing machine, supplies and some start-up money.

Another activity was the laying of the cornerstone for the Anthony Brown Baritone Comprehensive School. It will provide primary and secondary education for students who are former abductees or orphans.

"I took about 10 minutes to address the group before laying the cornerstone for the school," Brown says. "One thing I noted was that 300 to 400 years ago, my ancestors were stolen or sold from this continent. In the U.S., they were pillaged, killed, raped and held captive to work against their will. Despite those experiences, we survived and overcame.

"I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me. It is a special moment for me to be here, I told them, coming full circle to receive this great honor. We are one people."

"All of the songs we heard," Rodgers says, "were about what is happening to them right now—about the 20 years of war, the child mothers, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and its leader, Joseph Kony, who among other things abducted child soldiers in the north. It reminded me so much of the spirituals that we shared. Here the music was also functional and wonderful."

"The music came right out of the fabric of the people's lives," Brown says.

In the past 20 years, the LRA abducted an estimated 20,000 children to help their war effort in northern Uganda. Pader was their center of operation until February of this year. At the height of the war, an estimated 1.6 million people lived in IDP camps, government-run camps to protect the people.

One of the local organizations helping the former child soldiers and orphans—including the child mothers—is Friends of Orphans. Founded in 1999 by Anywar Ricky Richard, it pays school tuition fees, provides peace-building activities, including training in conflict resolution, provides income-generating skills, provides mosquito nets and training in the identification and marking of land mines, and offers its vocational training center, which trains former child soldiers in carpentry and child mothers in tailoring.

The vocational training center is called "Atim Ki Koma," which means, "Let Me Do It Myself."

—Phil Richard of Hesston College

We will take what we have learned back to the United States and tell your story.
—Anthony Brown

Inside a polling station in Kinshasa, the capital of Democratic Republic of Congo

Many Mennonites help Congo elections

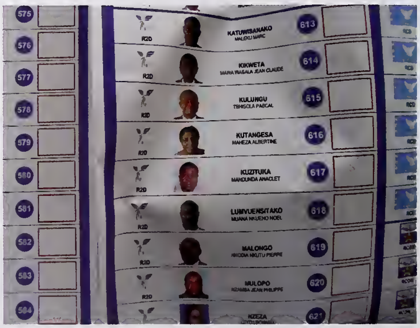
Photographs and a report from Canadian Mennonite artist Ray Dirks

On July 30, the overwhelming majority of Congolese people created a miracle of civility and inspiring dignity. Calm and determined, both electoral workers and electorate set out with a steady seriousness to do the right thing in their first national election.

Virtually all election observers and journalists reported few incidents. Police—who generally torment ordinary Congolese—were seen to be helping, to being servants of the people.

Congolese Mennonites made a conscious decision to be involved in the political process leading up to the elections. Mennonites were involved as candidates, as trainers and electoral workers, many as national observers.

They also invited their Christian brothers and sisters from overseas to come stand with them. As a result, three groups from outside the country traveled to Kinshasa, the capital city, at the invitation of the Church of Christ in Congo (ECC). Mennonites were one of the most responsive of Protestant groups from outside the country.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This detail from a ballot shows Mennonite Pascal Kulungu as number 615. Number 614, Jean Claude Kikweta, is a Mennonite Brethren.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) brought in election observers from Europe and North America. Canadian Mennonite University, through the Institute for Community Peace-building, cobbled together a group from Winnipeg. A third group came from the Waterloo North Mennonite Church in Ontario.

Mennonite Pascal Kulungu was the first person asked by the ECC to consider running for national deputy. Kulungu found himself listed as number 615 on page five of a six-page, poster-size ballot with 854 other candidates running for 14 positions (see photo below left).

Besides running for office, Kulungu, as director of the Center for Leadership Development, Peacebuilding and Good Governance, trained election observers and gave many talks on how to vote. He told listeners they could vote for him, but if they did not to vote for a Christian, for someone who is honest, someone who does not bribe. He said only the wealthy could afford to stage rallies since, as a leftover from the dictatorial Mobutu days, attendees expect gifts and may revolt if dissatisfied. Kulungu said the main reason he wished to be elected was to be able to bring a culture of peace to government.

The polls closed at 5 p.m. Counting followed in the same spirit as the first part of the day. Votes had been cast for national deputies and for the

A second round of voting, if no one candidate wins more than 50 percent of the vote on the first round, will take place Oct. 29.

The Manenga Mennonite Church

president. Thirty-three candidates were on the presidential ballot, making it significantly more straightforward than the one for deputies.

I sat through the presidential count at a polling station in Gombe, Kinshasa. Civility and transparency ruled. Other observers stayed late into the night—in two cases right through the night—as counting continued for the deputies. All reported that the atmosphere remained overwhelmingly civil and cooperative.

Ian Harvey from Manchester, England, and a part of the MCC team, and Megan McKenzie, from Winnipeg, stayed in Ngaba, Kinshasa, throughout the night, sleeping a few hours in empty ballot boxes in a mosquito-clouded open classroom as counting went on around them.

Harvey reported that the ballot counter in his polling station literally fell asleep at times between votes counted. Many Congolese electoral workers remained in their polling stations without water or food for up to two days.

The dedication and seriousness of the ordinary electoral workers and voters was magnificent and humbling to behold. Ballots and results have now been moved to compilation centers. Three days after the vote I visited a heavily guarded one where tallies were just beginning to be entered into computers. Results were not expected for three weeks.

That is three weeks for rumors, honest mistakes, temptations to tamper and bully that could derail a miracle of the ordinary masses.

During my last afternoon in Kinshasa I asked Kulungu whether he was still optimistic. Without hesitation he answered, "Yes."

The people of the Congo performed magnificently on July 30. Whether their leaders can follow is still up in the air. We, along with the humble Manenga Mennonite congregation, pray for peace, for democracy. A second round of presidential voting, if no one candidate wins more than 50 percent of the vote on the first round, will take place on Oct. 29. In that election there will be additional local contests and more Mennonites running for office.

The Democratic Republic of Congo needs peace. After brutal colonialism, wretched dictatorship, anarchy, spirit-sapping pillaging in 1991 and 1993, followed by a horrific civil war that left 4 million dead—virtually unnoticed by the outside world—Congolese people deserve peace and good government.—*Ray Dirks, curator at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg*

The dedication and seriousness of the ordinary electoral workers and voters was magnificent and humbling to behold.
—Ray Dirks

Far left: Pascal Kulungu fields questions from international observers

Left: An unidentified woman makes last minute preparations before a polling station opens. Party witnesses sit in the background.

Nelson Roth

In June, youth and members from Buhler (Kan.) Mennonite Church and Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan., worked on an outreach project to rebuild a community member's home in Gulfport, Miss.

Katrina survivors wonder what's next

Much work remains to be done, but Gulf States leaders remain hopeful.

As the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina approaches, many survivors ask, What's next? For many Native people in the Gulf States Mennonite Conference (GSMC), this is an especially difficult question.

"For people who had little, now they have nothing," says Steve Cheramie Risingsun, pastor of Native Christian Fellowship and Poarch Community Church, both in Atmore, Ala.

Many Native people who live off reservations reside on land passed down through generations by a matriarchal system. "They've always lived there," says Risingsun.

However, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will not assist anyone unless the land is in their name. These requirements "create a set of problems we didn't have before," he says.

Households must choose either to hire a land surveyor, which costs thousands of dollars, or be denied FEMA aid. The best way to approach this decision is on a case-by-case basis, says Risingsun. Some families see it as "nice and romantic" to rebuild on the same land and may try to do so, but other communities decide it might be best to relocate at this point, he says.

According to Risingsun, the volunteers' role is to help with the decision process, not provide concrete solutions. "Volunteers don't have a sense of the land or the sacredness of the land," he says.

Volunteers also should not make assumptions about recovery situations and should show sensitivity "as if [they are] going to a foreign country."

Scott Sundberg, director of communications for Mennonite Disaster Service, returned last month from a trip to New Orleans. He says MDS needs a proof of ownership before building can begin, and building codes must be consulted before construction begins. "There are disputes about that," he says. "It's even more difficult when records are lost by the storm."

At Point Aux Chenes, La., MDS worked with several Native tribes to prioritize the needs of households. After planning and discussions, the chiefs decided which house needed rebuilt first.

Sundberg says he understands why people want to rebuild on the land, as that is where their communities and lives are. "Whether we rebuild or not, people will return," he says. "There's shrimp to be harvested, crabs to be caught … and good land." As a Christian agency desiring to serve others, "we have to be where people are," he says.

Clearing up miscommunication: The months approaching the anniversary of the storm also provided opportunity for reconciliation.

A summit meeting held July 5-6 at Gulfhaven Mennonite Church, Gulfport, Miss., and Iglesia Amor Viviente, Metairie, La., offered time for GSMC to meet with Mennonite agencies and groups. GSMC includes 14 congregations across Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama.

About 30 representatives from various organizations, such as MDS, Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Mutual Aid eXchange

Correction: The article and photo on page 25 of the July 18 issue are by Twila Miller.

I see Katrina being able to make strong churches and make a stronger conference with the help of the Mennonite church.—Duane Maust

(MAX) participated in the meeting.

Bob Zehr, GSMC moderator, says, "We have hope out of that meeting," as misunderstandings between the agencies and survivors were addressed.

"We were heard when our pastors explained what it felt like to be the victim," he says.

At the meeting, MAX recognized people who needed help and regretted the hurt and miscommunication, says Zehr, who hopes to continue developing new connections between the hurricane survivors and church agencies.

Duane Maust, co-pastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church, Meridian, Miss., and GSMC moderator-elect, says, "It's easy to feel like we're a lost conference … but this year has wiped that thinking away." He says the meeting allowed agencies and churches to "better understand each other."

Volunteer efforts: The need for long-term volunteers continues. "We're running at full capacity," says Kevin King, MDS executive director.

One challenge is prioritizing where to send aid, he says, as locations have varying degrees of harm. Jubilee Mennonite Church faced an influx of people, the building of Gulfhaven Mennonite Church suffered damages, and Lighthouse Christian Fellowship, Buras, La., was "wiped off that map," he says, and sat under water for weeks.

"In many locations, it looks like day two of Katrina," King says. In these cases, long-term recovery committees, such as local Red Cross chapters, must work with MDS to rebuild.

Risingsun also explains the complications in coordinating short-term volunteers. For example, the one-month term of project directors creates difficulties when it takes several weeks to orient volunteers to a location, then their term ends only one week later.

"We provide volunteer labor, but we are dependent on a local community infrastructure," King says. Because of the enormity of the storm, community organizers themselves have been affected, which also slows the recovery process.

The next step for this year is casework to determine clients. One million people are living in zip codes not home to them. "There are people are scattered all over the U.S.," King says.

A flexible attitude: For Nelson Roth, pastor of Gulfhaven Mennonite Church, working with this trauma and recovery created uncharted challenges. "I've been in the ministry for 34 years, and this was a new one for me," he says.

Issues will arise that are not scheduled on the calendar, he says. "Just like last year there were things we didn't count on, there will be things we can't expect this year."

Roth hopes to address this year's upcoming hurdles in church services and Sunday school classes. The congregation's ministry is limited to a Sunday morning service. However, the church hosted two membership classes this past year. "It's a time of outreach," he says.

Roth hopes to be back on track with the church's ministries and normal functions next year, but "some things will never be what they used to be."

Maust says the recovery will take years and doubts people really comprehend what it will take to rebuild the city. "I get the feeling some people think we should have it all fixed already," he says.

However, he hopes this difficulty can reinvigorate the churches of GSMC. "I see Katrina being able to make strong churches and make a stronger conference with the help of the Mennonite church," he says.—*Anna Groff*

Two youth from Bethany Mennonite Church in Hartville, Ohio, caulk windows at Gulfhaven Mennonite Church in Gulfport, Miss., in June.

Nelson Roth

Asian Anabaptists trained in S. Korea

July conference attracts Mennonites from Taiwan, Japan and Philippines.

Courtesy photo

Richard Rancap from the Philippines and Soon Jae Kwon from South Korea try to untangle themselves during team-building activities on the first day at the Asia Anabaptist Discipleship Training in South Korea.

What happens when an unlikely group of Christians living in different countries, speaking various languages and coming from diverse backgrounds, meet together for nine days of discipleship training from an Anabaptist perspective?

They do justice, love kindness and walk humbly.

From July 7 to 15, 15 participants from Taiwan, Japan, Philippines and South Korea gathered to dialogue and experience what it means to be Anabaptist in Asia. The Asia Anabaptist Discipleship Training Program, hosted by Jesus Village Church and the Korea Anabaptist Center, took place at Abba Shalom Koinonia in the mountains near the demilitarized zone three hours northeast of Seoul. Despite the peaceful setting, the military bases and soldiers in the area were a constant reminder of the context in which Anabaptists are called to be disciples.

The training program theme was "Walking the Way," based on Micah 6:8. Richard Rancap, pastor in the Integrated Mennonite Church of the Philippines, challenged the group to consider carefully what it means to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly in individual contexts.

After several days at Abba, the trainees divided into three groups. A "doing justice" group learned about peace- and justice-related issues in Korea by visiting an organization working for land justice, a home for elderly women who were sexual slaves of the Japanese military and "The Frontiers," a Christian organization sending young people to serve through peace camps in conflict areas around the world.

A "loving kindness" group visited with patients at a hospice, walked with workers from a Christian homeless ministry, learned from the Korean Sharing Movement working in North Korea and served 1,000 lunches at a soup kitchen in central Seoul.

The "walking humbly" group examined Korean churches' discipleship and community and history. Group members visited the largest church in the world (Yeoido Full Gospel Church) and worshiped and served with Sarangbang Community Church, a small, rural, community-focused congregation that runs an alternative school.

During final-day reflections, a Japanese participant working with peace and justice projects at her church and issues of sexual slavery said she was inspired to continue her work, knowing others in Asia support her.

A Filipino participant will explore ongoing food distribution and medical service in her country. Words from a homeless man spoken in Japanese convinced one participant to work at homeless ministries needed in Japan.

"Without action," the Japanese man said, "we can't know the meaning of prayer and study."

One participant from Taiwan leaves with a passion for peace-building awareness in the Taiwanese Mennonite Church, particularly in relationship with China.

What happened when this unlikely group gathered? They experienced God's Spirit in community and left inspired and encouraged to continue following God's call to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly in all contexts. Participants hope to continue learning from each other "walking the way" as disciples of Christ in Asia.—*Cheryl Woelk, who works at Korea Anabaptist Center through Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness*

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EMM commissions 93 mission workers

Eighteen-day institute provides training for 22 long-term missionaries, interns.

From June 12 to 30, World Missions Institute, held on the campus of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School, helped provide foundational biblical, historical, cultural and strategic training for 22 long-term missionaries and mission interns.

The institute was followed by a commissioning for 93 short- and long-term missionaries on July 9. The evening included testimonies from both an Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) worker in Central Asia and a woman who is reaching out near her home in Wrightsville, Pa. Then a team from Illinois Mennonite Conference, led by conference minister Wayne Hochstedler, gave a mission challenge.

Hochstedler noted that three years ago, a missionary from Patagonia, Argentina, Juan Siebert, challenged their conference, "Where are your missions?"

"We showed him soup kitchens and remodeling projects," Hochstedler said, "but Juan persisted, 'This is good. But where are you planting churches? Where are people coming into the kingdom?'"

"The churches of Argentina sent us Juan Siebert as a missionary," Hochstedler said, "and this has grown into the Southern Illinois Mission Partnership. Most importantly we have been changed as we've stepped out—without having a clear strategy—learning to depend on God."

Hochstedler explained that in the last several years, three southern Illinois Mennonite churches have begun to reach out in Mt. Vernon, three hours away. God has connected them with other like-minded people who have been praying for Mt. Vernon. On visits every other Saturday, they've joined a local house church and are in the process of erecting a building for training house church leaders.

"We are the sent, not only the sending ones," Hochstedler said. "We're becoming more intentional about the larger purposes of God."

EMM president Richard Showalter reported that people told him, "That was a powerful evening."

One man from another part of the church said, "I've never been in a meeting like this before. There's no other part of the Mennonite church where you can see a thousand people gathered to send out nearly a hundred missionaries."

Following the commissioning service, many of the long-term missionaries headed to Black Rock Retreat for the Discovery and Enrichment event, which Global Ministries director Mervin Charles describes as a "mission family reunion" as well as a training time.

Jon and Loice Byler served as primary resource people. The Global Fair on July 15 offered an exotic mix of everything from henna hand painting from the Middle East to Mexican piñatas, served up with Turkish coffee and iced Thai tea.

Kenton Glick

Members of missionary support teams and other friends and relatives surround missionaries for prayer in clusters at the close of the commissioning service.

A three-day training for 12 mission directors and mission representatives, July 17-19, included training on team formation and crisis management, along with big-picture brainstorming about headquarters and field interaction.

"The most moving word of affirmation I heard," said Showalter, "was from a missionary couple who had worked for many years outside … the EMM global family—then was led to serve among us several years ago. With no apparent attempt to exaggerate, they said this week, 'When we came to EMM, we thought we had died and gone to heaven.'"—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

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Dutch plan visitor center in Witmarsum

A 'destination for global Mennonites' near Menno Simmons' home, church.

Karen Sensenig

Onijdes Sijtsma, Dutch Mennonite historian, and Kenneth Sensenig discuss plans for the International Menno Simons Center at the 1878 marker noting a Mennonite meeting place for 300 years.

"A time to be born and a time to die," the ancient Ecclesiastes writer observed. Dutch Mennonites know these cycles well. Dying Dutch Anabaptists birthed a new, living church in the 16th century.

Today a struggling Dutch church seeks new life by inviting global Anabaptists to join them in remembering the past and anticipating the future. The tranquil plaza sprawling before the old Leeuwarden prison belies the violent history witnessed here nearly 500 years ago. Leeuwarden, then and now the provincial capital of the Friesland province in northern Netherlands, witnessed many trials and executions recorded in *Martyrs Mirror*.

Here in 1531, Sicke Freerks testified of his faith in Christ and offered his neck to the executioner's sword. In nearby Pingjum, this execution caught the attention of a Catholic priest named Menno Simons. Here among the dikes, cattle and canals, Menno soon joined other 16th-century reformers. Together they forced the established church to deal with new ideas growing like spring grass in the surrounding Friesland pastures.

Now nearly five centuries later, the faith descendants of these martyrs in Friesland and elsewhere in the Netherlands dream of new life. A committee developing an International Menno Simons Center (IMSC) aims to tell the world this 500-year-old story. Planners hope to invite global Anabaptists and others to come and enrich each other by sharing their faith stories.

Today living faith within the Dutch Mennonite church confronts new challenges. Dutch culture places primary emphasis upon personal liberty and individual choice. Intense privacy surrounds expressions of personal and corporate faith. Seeking to influence another's faith is perceived as invasive and rude. As one spokesperson for the IMSC noted, "The prevailing culture is allergic to it."

In this setting, little space exists for a church to exercise an invitational presence. As a result, declining Dutch Mennonite congregations ponder their roles in the global Anabaptist network and remain unsure of their future and relevance to the children, grandchildren and communities.

But a remnant remembers how this church nourished a fledgling movement in centuries past. In recent years, new stirrings fanned latent passions into burning flames. A desire emerged to offer a more intentional invitation to global Anabaptists and to demonstrate traditional Dutch hospitality to those responding. Dutch leaders realized some visitors may leave Friesland without fully appreciating how profoundly the region's 16th-century church shaped the current, global Anabaptist experience. IMSC aims to enlarge and enrich such experiences.—*Kenneth Sensenig, who serves as a Mennonite Central Committee consultant for IMSC*

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What priorities for interchurch relations?

Mennonite Church USA leaders meet with other Christian leaders in July.

Richard Kauffman

From left, Al Meyer, George R. Brunk III, Roy Jiminez and Tim Stair participate in a small group discussion during an interchurch relations consultation in July in Donaldson, Ind.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership hosted a consultation with church leaders July 19-21 at Lindenwood Retreat Center in Donaldson, Ind. The event was conducted in an effort for the group to seek counsel and engage in discernment about priorities for how Mennonite Church USA relates to Christians of other traditions.

About 30 Mennonite leaders gathered for the three-day consultation on interchurch relations, and representatives from Disciples Peace Fellowship, Pentecostal Charismatic Peace Fellowship and Catholic Peace Fellowship, among others, participated in a panel discussion on how Mennonite Church USA might relate to denominational peace fellowships in a mutually beneficial way.

"This was a very important time to gather in order to pray, listen and discern what God is doing and how God wants us to relate to other Christians," says André Gingerich Stoner, director of interchurch relations for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership. "Mennonite Church USA is one small but important part of the broader body of Christ, with important gifts to give and gifts to receive from other Christians."

Pentecostal minister and professor Paul Alexander participated in the panel discussion and is an example of how beneficial interchurch relationships can be for individuals.

"I am so very grateful for the way the Mennonite church has blessed my life," Alexander said. He shared how the gospel of peace changed his life. After researching the pacifist origins of his Pentecostal denomination and learning that his own grandfather was a conscientious objector in World War II, Alexander founded the Pentecostal Charismatic Peace Fellowship, which now has more than 500 members in seven states.

The last day of the consultation involved discernment about future direction. The group affirmed continuing to work together and appoint volunteer representatives who can serve as channels of communication and relationship with individuals and congregations from other traditions.
—Marathana Prothro with André Gingerich Stoner for Mennonite Church USA

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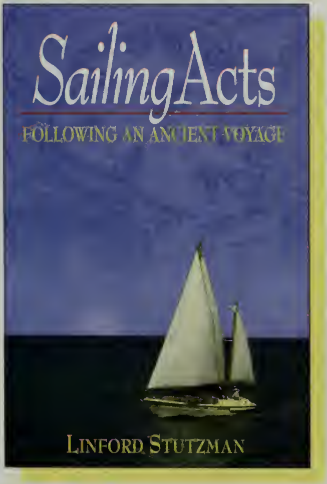

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College Hosts: Carl and Vera Hansen, long term missionaries and President, and Solomon Tilahun, Advancement Officer and lecturer.

Event marks 30 years for women pastors

Longtime leader Ralph Lebold is honored for his role in changing the church.

Jennifer Konkle

Women pastors in Ontario form panel (left to right): Muriel Bechtel, Renee Sauder, Martha Smith Good and Wendy Janzen

"The face of leadership in the Mennonite church has changed significantly during the past 50 years," says Henry Paetkau, president of Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont. "Through his many involvements in a variety of key roles, Ralph Lebold helped lead the church through those changes."

For the past several years the college has hosted a fund-raising banquet in support of the Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training. This year's banquet celebrated the publication of "Strange and Wonderful Paths: the Memoirs of Ralph Lebold." The book chronicles Lebold's life through periods of rapid social change from the 1960s to the 1990s.

According to Herb Schultz, retired Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada (MCEC) pastor and conference minister, "Ralph Lebold's journey has profoundly impacted the calling and equipping of church leaders in Ontario and beyond. His call, preparation, vision and service fostered new programs in an era when pastoral leadership styles and demands changed drastically."

In his memoirs, Lebold recalls the first commissioning service for a female pastor in Ontario, Doris Weber. For the occasion, he preached a sermon based on Acts 10—the visions of Peter and Cornelius—which opened the door for Peter to minister to the Gentiles. Similarly, Lebold suggested, "God was calling us in new directions by being open to women as God's ministers." He notes that this was a pivotal event in opening the door for other women to serve in active leadership roles in the Mennonite church.

In recognition of his significant contribution to the church and his role in introducing women to ministry roles in the church, this year's banquet celebrated "Three Decades of Women in Ministry: Reflections on the Changing Face of Leadership."

A panel of speakers, hosted by Marianne Mellinger, coordinator of leadership formation for MCEC, included female representatives of women in ministry from the 1970s, 1980s and now. *—Jennifer Konkle of Conrad Grebel University College*

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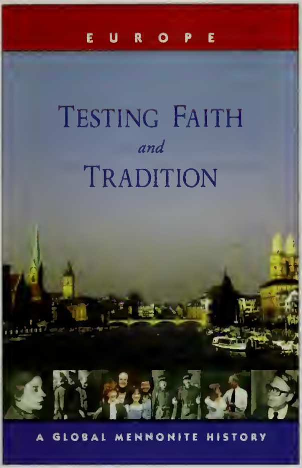

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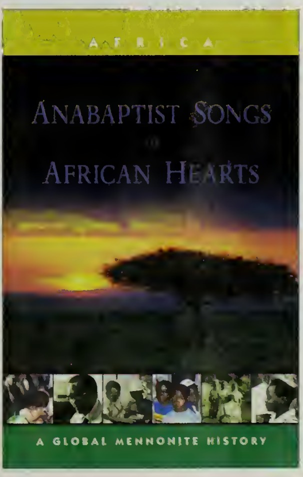
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CALENDAR

Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa., ***rock climbing weekend***, Sept. 22-23. Challenging rock climbing for beginners to pros (ages 13+) Cost is $52 per person, www.camphebron.org.

Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa., ***weekend riders***, Sept. 22-24. Horse lovers weekend for all riding levels. Cost is $155 per person, www.camphebron.org.

Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa., ***Mother/Daughter Slumber Party***. Bonding experience for moms and "tweens" (ages 11-13); $87/person, www.camphebron.org

Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, ***Active Parenting of Teens*** course for all parents of middle and high school students. Oct. 16, 23 and 30, Nov. 6, 13 and 20, 7-9 p.m. This course will help parents learn how to increase cooperation; communicate effectively; use discipline skills that help teens make positive, healthy choices; build courage and self-esteem in teens; and help teens develop responsibility. Classes are free but an optional parent guide is available for $13.00. Please register by Oct. 6 by contacting Christine Grosh at 717-299-0436, ext. 315, ww.lancastermennonite.org

Quilt and crafts sale by area Mennonites to benefit poor Honduran children and other world relief projects, Sept. 15-16 at **Georgia Living Building**, Georgia National Fairgrounds, Perry, Ga. For more information, contact Brenda Shelby at 404-344-5012 or ashelby@comcast.net.

The annual **MCC *Flatlander Bicycle Ride*** will be held on Saturday, Sept. 16, originating at the MCC offices in North Newton, Kan. While participating in this benefit ride, you will also experience Christian fellowship and good food. Enjoy the beautiful autumn harvest season in Kansas and get wholesome exercise while raising funds for MCC to provide cisterns for families in Bangladesh. Information and registration forms are available through the MCC offices in North Newton and at www.mcc.org/bike. Rides of 35, 45 and 65 miles will accommodate the novice as well as the experienced rider.

WORKERS

Bodden, Andrew, was licensed Aug. 8 as associate minister at Iglesia Menonita Encuetnro de Renovacion, Miami, Fla.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bauman, Tyson Jonathan, July 12, to Randy and Jackie Martin Bauman, Elmira, Ont.

Bert, David Reid, July 14, to Daryl and Carrie Stambaugh Bert, Austin, Texas.

Birky, Carson Douglas, Aug. 1, to Aaron and Staci Birky, McLean, Ill.

Bixler, Calvin Lowell, Aug. 3, to Ben and Sarah Gehman Bixler, Harrisonburg, Va.

Brenner, Ashley Michelle, Aug. 13, to Levi and Kym Lepley Brenner, Akron, Ohio.

Gomez, Aneesa Mariah, July 19, to Juan and Sylvia Serrano Gomez, Reedley, Calif.

Shue, Harper Eliza , Aug. 13, to Tim and Jennifer Swartzentruber Shue, Kidron, Ohio.

Hofstetter, Caleb Jeremiah, Aug. 5, to Bryan and Linda Troyer Hofstetter, Dalton, Ohio.

Knechel, Tianna Lillie, July 16, to Darryl and Stacey Knechel, Harleysville, Pa.

Leed, Mason James, Aug. 10, to James and Merida Beck Leed, Lancaster, Pa.

Miedel, Aaron Thomas, Aug. 9, to Anson and Hannah Miller Miedel, Roanoke, Va.

Miller, Alice Rene, Aug. 12, to Daniel and Natalie Musser Miller, Lancaster, Pa.

Montano, Caleb Josiah, July 22, to Isaias and Edith Montano, Reedley, Calif.

Rowsam, Jack Benjamin, Juy 28, to Gene and Lorraine Lyndaker Rowsam, Lowville, N.Y.

Shuman, Kennedy Marie, July 22, to Steve and Kellie Troyer Shuman, Akron, Ohio.

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Skogerboe, Iver Neil, July 8, to Noah and Cori Skogerboe, Minneapolis, Minn.

Smith, Josiah Paul, May 23, to George and Angela Leslie Smith, Warsaw, Ind.

Thompson, Landon Reece, July 22, to Tim and Carla Miller Thompson, Goshen, Ind.

Wyse, Lucy Jiao QiQi Swartzentruber, July 24, to Tim Wyse and Elaine Swartzentruber, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Yoder, Mia Annabelle, Aug. 3, to Aaron and Melinda Esch Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

Amaral/Coon: Laura Amaral, Pelotas, RS, Brazil, and Jeremy Coon, Archbold, Ohio, July 1 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Anderson/Harris: Greta Anderson, Iowa City, Iowa, and Mark Harris, Nevada, Iowa, July 1 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

Beitzel/Caudill: Wendell Beitzel, Daytona Beach, Fla., and Kimberly Caudill, Largo, Fla., June 17 at Springs (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Berkey/Whitmore: Molly S. Berkey, Harrisonburg, Va., and Travis Whitmore, Harrisonburg, July 1 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Bishop/O'Shaughnessy: Griffen Bishop, Denver, Colo., and Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Denver, Aug. 12 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

Boshart/Yoder: Tony Boshart, Parnell, Iowa, and Tanna Yoder, Kalona, Iowa, July 29 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Brenneman/Mullet: Alyssa Brenneman, Pittsburg, Pa., and Steven Mullet, Pittsburg, May 19 in Rome, Italy.

Bucklin/Gerber: Anna Nickel Bucklin, Mountain Lake, Minn., and Ryan Michael Esau Gerber, Beatrice, Neb., Aug. 5 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Cherry/Tranchemontagne: Stefan Cherry, St. Jacobs, Ont., and Pascale Tranchemontagne, Guelph, Ont., July 1 at Salem United Church, Cornwall, Ont.

Clem/Hofer Friesen: John Clem, Yankton, S.D., and Monica Hofer Friesen, Freeman, S.D., July 8 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Driedger/Ninomiya: Katie Driedger, Waterloo, Ont., and Matthew Ninomiya, Waterloo, Aug. 5 at Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, Ont.

Friesen/Meyers: Eliot Friesen, Goshen, Ind., and Carrie Meyers, Goshen, Aug. 12 at Goshen College cabin.

Goins/Myers: Joanna Goins, Broadway, Va., and Benjamin Myers, Lancaster, Va., July 21 at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hofer/Vetch: Amy Hofer, Freeman, S.D., and Shane Vetch, Freeman, July 28 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Janzen/Taylor: Scott Janzen, Henderson, Neb., and Christa Taylor, Kidron, Ohio, July 22 in an outdoor ceremony in Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Kempe/Showalter: Peter Kempe III, West Milford, N.J., and Angela Showalter, Harrisonburg, Va., July 1 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Kratz/Stauffer: Casey Kratz, San Diego, Calif., and Dave Stauffer, Phoenix, Ariz., July 22 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix.

Miller/Swartzendruber: Douglas Miller, Hillsboro, Kan., and Holly Swartzendruber, Hillsboro, June 10 at Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren, Hillsboro, Kan.

Martin/Walton: Vance Martin, Ronks, Pa., and Jennifer Walton, Bird-In-Hand, Pa., Aug. 12 at Otterbein United Methodist Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Miller/Slack: Bethany Miller, Harrisonburg, Va., and Christopher Slack, Greenfield, Mass., July 8 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Moore/Schlabach: Anne Moore, North Liberty, Iowa, and Neil Schlabaugh, Wellman, Iowa, Aug. 5 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Oswald/Schrag: Clark Oswald, Kalona, Iowa, and Elizabeth "Libby" Schrag, North Newton, Kan., Aug. 5 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Schrock/Wollman: Jeremy Schrock, Freeman, S.D., and Amanda Wollman, Freeman, July 28 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Stutzman/Yoder: Shawna Stutzman, Lititz, Pa., and Matthew Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va., July 1 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Andre, Gail S., 86, Archbold, Ohio, died July 25. Spouse: Evelyn Nofzinger Short Andre. Parents: Ross and Alma Andre. Children: Carl, Dorothy Lowman, Rachel Peters, Lois Andre Springer, Verle Short, Lee Short, Jane Gearig; 14 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 29 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Eberly, Michael Roy, 66, Woodburn, Ind., died July 14 from a blood clot during surgery. Spouse: Dorothy L. Eberly. Children: Mathew Charles, Rebecca Detwiller, Jennifer; three grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at Maplewood Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

"For The Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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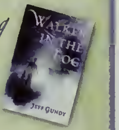

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"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

Erb, Robert (Bob) D., 79, Hesston, Kan., died Aug. 2. Spouse: Mary Troyer Erb. Parents: Mose and Ida Schwietzer Erb. Children: Kathy Erb Whitcher, Jim, Lori Erb Thimm; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Eshleman, Ruth Keim, 83, Orrville, Ohio, died Aug. 1 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Sam J. Eshleman (deceased). Parents: Noah and Mary Immel Keim. Children: Robert, Carol Horst, Dean, Allen; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 6 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Gerber, Pauline Nussbaum, 87, Apple Creek, Ohio, died July 23 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Leo Franklin Gerber. Parents: Sam and Lina Amstutz Nussbaum. Children: Jean Steffen, Connie Zuercher, Linda Miller, Linda Renee Himes; 12 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 26 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Glick, Herman N., 86, Atglen, Pa., died July 15. Spouse: Mary Umble Glick. Parents: Reuben and Mary Engel Glick. Children: James, Ann Glick Derrick, Virginia Glick Graybill, Susan Glick Ruth; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 19 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen.

Goertzen, Susie Flaming, 84, Goessel, Kan., died July 4. Spouse: Eldon Goertzen. Parents: John J. and Anna Brandt Flaming. Children: Brenda Buller, Stanley; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 8 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Hostetler, Ervin Monroe, 69, Cairo, Neb., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Karen Hostetler. Parents: Jacob and Verda Stutzman Hostetler. Children: Eric, Aron; two grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Cairo Baptist Church.

Kaufman, Jennings, 73, Marion, S.D., died Aug. 4. Parents: Elias and Hannah Deckert Kaufman. Funeral: Aug. 8 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

King, Marie Adeline, 90, West Liberty, Ohio, died Aug. 4 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: J. Winfred King (deceased). Parents: Dan C. and Maude Allgyer Yoder. Children: Joe, Jay, Danny; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 7 at West Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Koehn, Eugene E., 82, Newton, Kan., died Aug. 4. Spouse: Clara Janzen Koehn. Parents: Abe J. and Minnie Eck Koehn. Children: Sherri Kirk, Peggy Davis; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 8 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Kopp, W. LaMarr, 76, State College, Pa., died Aug. 2. Spouse: Nel Boon Kopp. Parents: Lehman and Ella Kurtz Kopp. Children: Kristine K. Charles, Erik L., Ingrid K. Magill; four grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 5 at University Mennonite Church, State College.

Kratzer, Sally, 92, Dalton, Ohio, died July 14. Spouse: George Kratzer (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Lovina Hershberger. Children: Cheyenne Geiser, Erich; four grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 17 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Lehman, Donna Jean, 66, Fort Wayne, Ind., died July 26. Spouse: Michael Lehman. Parents: Edison and Berniece Liechty Lehmann. Children: Bruce, Carl, Pamela Pulliam; four grandchildren. Funeral: July 31 at Maplewood Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne.

Lehman, Marvin, 86, Kidron, Ohio, died May 24. Spouse: Oleta Lehman. Parents: Simon J. and Ida Lehman. Children: Joann Erb, John (deceased); two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 27 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Miller, Ann, 93, Kidron, Ohio, died June 29. Spouse; Marvin Miller (deceased). Parents: E.P. and Sarah Gerber. Children: Joyce Landon, Les, Duane, Glenn; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 3 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Miller, Daniel J., 92, Middlebury, Ind., died Aug. 1. Spouse: Betty Kaufman Miller (deceased). Parents: Jonas J.N. and Lydia Hershberger Miller. Child: Glen Dale; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 4 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Nikkel, Leland, 77, Moundridge, Kan., died July 31. Spouse: Esther Ediger Nikkel. Parents: Henry H. and Ineze Hiebert Nikkel. Children: Vickie Hildebrand, Bonita Kaufman, LeRoy, Debra Sission; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 5 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Plank, Joe, 74, Sarasota, Fla., died June 4 of cancer. Spouse: Mary Plank. Parents: Menno and Annie Plank. Children: Richard, Robert, Mary Joe Fitzjarrald; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 7 at Palms Funeral Home, Sarasota.

Stahl, Melvon J., 88, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 6. Spouse: Edna Mae Birkey Stahl (deceased). Parents: John and Gertrude Heffelbower Stahl. Children: Lyle, Margaret Mae Gage, Marlene Clingaman, Marilyn Troyer; 13 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 9 at Yoder Culp Funeral Home, Goshen.

Troyer, Raymond A., 89, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Aug. 11. Spouse: Lizzie Mae Troyer (deceased). Parents: Andrew and Ada Miller Troyer. Children: Mary Hawthorne, Ada Yoder, Marvin "Red", Henry, Raymond Jr., Charles "Chuck"; 11 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 17 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Yutzy, Earl C., 83, Plain City, Ohio, died Aug. 9. Spouse: Alice Frey Yutzy. Parents: Eli and Ida Kauffman Yutzy. Children: LaVern, Earlene Horst, Lynette Showalter, Mary Alice Ressler, Anita Schauer, Dawn Showalter, Luann; 24 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 13 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

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Dock Woods Community, a premier CCRC in the Lansdale, Pa., area is recruiting for an ***admissions coordinator*** position. Position requires an MSW with exceptional assessment and case management skills and is responsible for the comprehensive review and determination of appropriate level of care for individuals entering our CCRC. This position will also serve as primary clinical social worker to residents and families within our Assisted Living and Independent Living entities. The position requires an MSW with three years of experience in social work. Experience in hospital social work/case management and long-term care is highly desirable. Dock Woods offers competitive salary and benefits. Interested candidates should fax resumés to 215-565-2413.

West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship is a creative urban Anabaptist community seeking a ***full-time pastor***. We are a 20-year-old congregation with an average attendance of 80 consisting primarily of young adults and families. Members are active in leading worship, preaching and all aspects of church ministries. For more information about the church go to www.wpmf.com; for more information about the pastor position contact Drick Boyd 610-341-4360.

Chief executive officer: **Landis Homes**, a Mennonite retirement community in Lititz, Pa., seeks a new chief executive officer. Preferred candidates will have strong financial acumen, board experience, a clear values-based leadership style and be an active member of a Mennonite church. Send inquiries to: Kirk Stiffney, MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite A, Goshen, IN 46526, fax 574-534-3254 or email kirkstiffney@msn.com.

Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions is seeking a person to serve as a ***full-time development director*** to provide leadership for the fund-raising efforts of the mission program and serve as an advocate for mission in Virginia Conference. Experience in finance, familiarity with the Mennonite Church and good relational skills are required. Position is available immediately. Contact Lois Maust at 540-434-9727. Please submit resumé and application by Sept. 29.

Spruce Lake Retreat, a dynamic, multifaceted retreat center affiliated with the Mennonite Church, seeks a committed Christian for the key position of ***housekeeping manager*** to oversee all cleaning operations, plus housekeeping, laundry and custodial staff. Applicant must have excellent communication skills, experience in hospitality cleaning operations, supervision, scheduling and working computer knowledge. Salary and liberal benefits package provided commensurate with training/experience. On-camp housing may be available. Located in the Pocono Mts. of northeastern Pennsylvania (www.sprucelake.org). Send resumé to: Director of Operations, Spruce Lake Retreat, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505 x 118; fax 570-595-0328; email slrjobs@sprucelake.org.

Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church is seeking two pastors to provide leadership for its two worshiping fellowships. ***Lead pastor of Sanctuary Fellowship*** should have strong preaching gifts and experience with a multistaff congregation (or similar). Lead pastor for Praise Fellowship should have vision/experience in a more expressive, contemporary worship setting. These two pastors will join with the church administrator to form a leadership team for HMC. HMC is a large, multistaff congregation, with a strong commitment to worship, outreach, service and missions. Contact Frederic Miller at fmiller@hmcchurch.org or 540-434-4463 for initial information. Visit www.hmcchurch.org for more detail.

English conversation teachers needed! **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

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Western Mennonite School seeks ***full-time public relations manager*** to lead communications, public relations and event planning efforts. Other responsibilities include writing and providing marketing/communication support for fund-raising and admissions. Qualifications include bachelor's degree in related field and strong organizational, interpersonal and leadership skills.

Contact Andrea Wall at adwall@westernmennoniteschool.org or 866-343-9378.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students locally and various states and countries. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

Goshen College Department of Sociology/Anthropology and Social Work seeks applicants for a ***tenure-track position in sociology***, an internationally focused major; Ph.D. in sociology required by fall 2007. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment. Closing date for applications is Oct. 20, 2007.

Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for a ***director of development***. This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. The successful candidate will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment and be available to begin employment between August 2006 and July 2007.

Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net.

Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

Sharon Mennonite Church, a congregation of 260 in rural central Ohio near Columbus, invites applications for the position of ***full-time youth pastor***. Individual should have a zeal for Christ and passion for youth. Will give oversight primarily to the senior MYF and junior MYF, but also leadership to young adult ministries. Congregational information available upon request. Contact chair of search committee Glenn Hochstetler at 7675 Amity Pike, Plain City, OH 43064 or email sharonmenno@yahoo.com.

Goshen College is seeking a ***full-time director of public relations***. For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

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Submit letter of application, resumé and three references to: hr@emu.edu. Review of candidates begins immediately. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa., a growing congregation of 250+ adults and 130 children and youth, seeks applicants for a half-time ***associate pastor***. The associate pastor will carry a visible presence in worship, preaching and pastoral ministry. Applications received by Sept. 30 will be given full consideration. Contact the church office at 717-392-7567 or cmcl@mennonite.net. See job description at http://cmcl.pa.us.mennonite.net.

Amigo Centre is taking applications for ***associate director***. We are seeking a person with proven abilities in managing people and ministry. This role is focused on supervising people responsible for maintenance, food services and programming along with giving leadership to new program creation for youth and adults. Excellent oral and written communication skills are a must. A bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in camping and/or church or youth ministry is necessary. Interested people should send their resumé and references by Oct. 1, 2006, to Kent Miller at Amigo Centre, 26455 Banker Rd., Sturgis, MI 49091. If you have additional questions, feel free to call Kent at 269-651-2811.

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RESOURCES

What Am I Supposed to Do with My Life? Asking the Right Questions by Douglas J. Brouwer (Eerdmans, 2006, $14) presents a personal, spiritual response to the vocational questions people ask. Brouwer locates our true purpose in following Jesus' greater commandment: love God and love your neighbor. We find meaning and purpose, he says, by living not for ourselves but for something bigger than ourselves.

Religious Nuts, Political Fanatics: U2 in Theological Perspective by Robert Vagacs (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005, $15) weaves the threads of U2's lyrics, Scripture and theology to track the Irish rock band's theological insights and perspectives through their poetry.

Ethno Confessions in a Soviet State: Mennonites in Siberia, 1920-1980, Annotated Archival Listing of Archival Documents and Materials, Select Documents, edited by Andrey Savin (Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies and the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2006), explores the history of Mennonites in Siberia.

Last Moon Dancing: A Memoir of Love and Real Life in Africa by Monique Maria Schmidt (Clover Park Press, 2006, $24.95) tells what happens when Schmidt, the daughter of a Mennonite sheep farmer and a big-city sorority girl, embarks on a quest to find her true self and ends up a Peace Corps volunteer in Benin.

The Politics of Discipleship and Discipleship in Politics: Jürgen Moltmann Lectures in Dialogue with Mennonite Scholars, edited by Willard M. Swartley (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005, $16), presents four lectures the German theologian gave at two Mennonite seminaries in 1983, responses by Mennonite scholars to the lectures, Moltmann's responses to those plus a new essay by Moltmann on peacemaking and dragonslaying.

Study guides for recent Herald Press books have been posted on the publisher's Web site: www.heraldpress.com/studygds/. Recently posted are guides to the following books: **Getting in the Way: Stories from Christian Peacemaker Teams** by Tricia Gates Brown, **Iraq: A Journey of Hope and Peace** by Peggy Gish, **MennoFolk: Mennonite and Amish Folk Culture** by Ervin Beck and **Land of Revelation: A Reconciling Presence in Israel** by Roy H. Kreider.

The Muria Story: A History of the Chinese Mennonite Churches of Indonesia by Lawrence M. Yoder (Pandora Press, 2006, $38) chronicles the formation and development of the first non-Western Mennonite church to be organized by indigenous people. Yoder is professor of missiology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

Making the News: An Essential Guide for Effective Media Relations by John Longhurst (Novalis, 2006, $16.95) helps churches or nonprofit organizations tell the largest number of people about their events, programs and issues without spending a lot of money. Longhurst is director of communications and marketing for Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

Smoke Jumping on the Western Fireline: Conscientious Objectors During World War II by Mark Matthews (University of Oklahoma Press, 2006, $29.95) tells the story of World War II COs who volunteered for Civilian Public Service as U.S. Forest Service smoke jumpers. Matthews draws on extensive interviews and original documents. The book includes 23 black and white photos and two maps.

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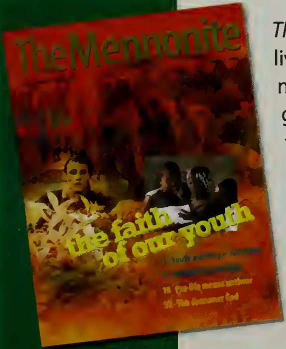

The Mennonite is a great way for students to nurture their spiritual lives and stay connected with the larger Mennonite community no matter which school they attend. As future leaders of the church, getting this age group involved now will help them understand where the church has been, is currently and where it is heading in the future.

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The stuff of a goodly heritage

Sara Wenger Shenk is an author and serves as associate dean and associate professor of Christian education at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

On occasion I memorize Scripture while I drive, glancing at the Bible on the seat beside me. It's a driving hazard. I don't recommend it. I spent time with Psalm 16 on one five-hour trip. Verse 6 echoed off the page in my grandfather's voice: "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage."

The whole Psalm rings with a sense of well-being—one of those days David felt on top of the world. What, I wonder, did he mean by a goodly heritage? What did my grandfather mean? What might it look, smell or feel like for us? If it's good for you, is it also good for me? How do we make a good heritage happen for our children?

Psychologists, sociologists, economists, theologians and philosophers have their own angles on what makes life good. Each of us, whether consciously or not, has our own blend of hunches, proverbs or gestures we think are essential for good to happen. But for many of us (perhaps most of us) life doesn't feel that good; and for some it's an act of courage just to get out of bed. Goodness eludes us, and in our shame and disappointment we imagine it's because we're not good enough.

Sometimes, no matter how hard I've tried to be good, things break in my hands and, more painfully, in my relationships.

What makes a family work well? The answers are complicated, partial. As well-known author Mary Pipher observes, honest parents don't always raise honest kids. Abusive parents sometimes have wonderful children. Some unhappy children come from sensitive, child-focused parents. Children who are loved and protected sometimes grow up strong and confident, and sometimes they are like hothouse flowers that whine and quickly wither. Neglected children sometimes become resilient, while others slowly die. Well-intentioned families sometimes have extraordinarily bad luck with their children, while parents who seem to care less, sometimes raise successful children.

There's no simple answer to what makes life good. The communities that wrote the Bible listened to their real-life experience and to God and wrote stories, revelations and poetry about their growing sense of what a goodly heritage looks like. Long before there was psychology, sociology or economics, the biblical writers were onto what makes life good. But that goodness was usually born out of brokenness, failure, despair. David the poet, exulting in his goodly heritage, was overlooked by his father when Samuel the prophet came calling. His seven eligible brothers were offered first as more worthy king material. David's multiple familial failures are the stuff of graphic stories in the Hebrew Scriptures. The many, many Psalms lamenting his despair groan with pathos. Yet his poetry also shines with the kind of joy only born out of pain, reassuring us with primal resonance that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives.

I believe in and spend a lot of time writing about the practical ways we care for each other, around our tables, at bedside, in each other's living rooms, church fellowship halls—the real, down-to-earth ways we experience a goodly heritage. When we slow down and pay attention, cherish each other and our neighbors in ways that honor God, we experience the best life can offer. As spiritual heirs of the Anabaptists, we know in our minds, if not always in our bones, that the good life in our households is all about loving our enemies, washing each other's feet, breaking bread together, living simply, showing mutual care, feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, singing our lives, praying and delighting in the Scriptures.

But the older I get, the more it seems that what makes for goodness is a mystery. Sometimes, no matter how hard I've tried to be good, things break in my hands and, more painfully, in my relationships. And sometimes, no matter how badly I've blown it, goodness shows up, shining through my tears, breaking through my failure as a mother, a wife, a sister. And that goodness often looks quite different from how I imagined it should look. It is good in ways that surprise; that require me to redefine what I thought a goodly heritage looked like.

Goodness finally is a gift, a gift from a God who delights to give good gifts, a gift from a God who raises up even what is lost, shamed or defeated and makes it the stuff of a goodly heritage. TM

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Willie Mae Thomas, MMA advocate and deacon of Hopewell Mennonite Church in Reading, Pa.

The real gift is in the giving.

Just ask Willie Mae Thomas, who says, "It's been a blessing to work with street ministries." The first female deacon of her congregation and an MMA advocate, Willie Mae is an excellent resource for people within her congregation and community.

Like other Mennonite Church USA congregations, Hopewell Mennonite Church offers countless ministry opportunities – from one-on-one ministries like hospital visitations and prisoner counseling to large-scale efforts like a community-wide youth ministry and food bank, a program partnered by Mennonite Mission Network.

Willie Mae knows involvement is the key to being part of God's plan. "Everyone has a gift," she says. "It's up to us to ask God, 'Where do you want me to be – and what do you want me to do?' " That faith is why Mennonite Church USA is joyfully following Jesus into the world – trusting that he will equip us to do his work in it.

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Everett J. Thomas

Racial/ethnic re-creation

The racial/ethnic associate groups in our denomination are critically important if we want to make progress on one of Mennonite Church USA's top priorities: dismantling racism. After two major gatherings this summer (see *The Mennonite*, Aug. 15, pages 19-21), it appears we are making some progress toward this goal, and the advocacy groups created for underrepresented racial/ethnic members are flourishing.

Some 400 people participated in the Native Assembly in late July in Poarch, Ala. Since Native Americans do not recognize the U.S.-Canadian border as part of their history, the Alabama gathering included representatives from 19 tribes and bands from both Canada and the United States. The Dallas gathering, held in early August, included biennial business meetings for Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH) and the African American Mennonite Association (AAMA). Asian representatives also participated, although there are no formal associate groups for Asian Mennonites similar to AAMA and IMH.

AAMA and IMH are now in solid shape; that means they will continue to engage Mennonite Church USA from positions of strength in the future. But that has not always been the case. For a variety of reasons, both (and their predecessor organizations) struggled during the past decade.

We've created some structures for dismantling racism; now it's time to let those structures re-create the church.

Two years ago, IMH elected a new moderator. But he resigned for personal reasons and under duress in 2005. Samuel Lopez, the moderator-elect, stepped in to complete the term. This leadership change came while IMH was dealing with other challenges. Putting together the former Hispanic groups AMIGA (General Conference Mennonite Church) and Hispanic Mennonite Convention (Mennonite Church) was not easy.

But that process is complete; Iglesia Menonita Hispana is now oriented to the future. For example, after four years of debate and discussion, the group adopted a new constitution in Dallas. Another example: A woman was elected moderator-elect for the first time; Juanita Nuñez is co-pastor at Ebenezer Christian Church in Apopka, Fla., and will succeed Lopez in 2008.

AAMA also has been transformed since the mid-1990s, but not because there was a General Conference Mennonite Church group with whom it needed to merge. Instead, it has matured from a struggling organization trying to create a network while speaking prophetically to white power structures in the church.

A lot of the credit for AAMA's resurgence goes to Leslie Francisco III, who has been leading the group for much of the past decade. But the group is also blessed with an impressive membership of successful pastors and other gifted leaders. Their persistence and commitment will give AAMA an even greater voice in the next decade.

These associate groups are critical to the process of rooting out racism within Mennonite Church USA. But there are other structures that need tending also. Kenyetta Aduma Twine recently resigned her position with Executive Leadership as staff for the multicultural relations office. Whoever succeeds her (a search process is underway) will have major influence in the next chapter of our efforts to dismantle racism.

A third important structure for dismantling racism is the Damascus Road antiracism program sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee. This resource has been important for Mennonite Church USA—especially as it gave us the language we need in the fight against racism. But that program is aging and needs to adapt to a 2006 church that is different from the church in 1995—in part because of Damascus Road. In the next stage of our efforts to dismantle racism, we may need to look for a different framework—if underrepresented racial/ethnic members and the associate groups agree that such a change is necessary.

It is right that Mennonite Church USA named dismantling racism one of its top priorities. We've created structures for doing that; now it's time to let those structures re-create us.—ejt

TheMennonite

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Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord

Elaine Bryant is missional minister at Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."—Revelation 14:13

Hearing the title words one morning caused me to wonder if I was being given words to prepare me for death, as opposed to the healing for which I and so many others had been praying. In keeping with my custom, whether words heard or dreams or songs, I went to the Scriptures to find similar words and their context in order to get a connection for the here-and-now on the basis of the significance for whatever times, situations or circumstances that are being addressed in the biblical context.

As I read verse 13, the phrase "in the Lord" stood out. When the question, "Are you ready to die?" came to mind, knowing that I have asked the Lord to be my Savior and Lord, as well as seek—admittedly imperfectly—to abide in him, as one of his branches, by the "in the Lord" criteria, I could say yes to that question.

The question along with the reading of verses 6-13 caused me to think not so much about my desire for healing but about a message to share—with the question, as a mind-catching title, connected to a subject of "Living to Die in the Lord." In verses 6 and 7 an "angel … with the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people."—saying … "'Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water'" stood out to me. Everlasting points to all times, including the turbulent times in which we live.

Talking about death and dying doesn't seem to be a proper subject to be preached as good news. Since, however, death sooner or later is a reality we all will face and since many of us are living lives of quiet—and not so quiet—desperation that are hectic and stressed in one way or another, the thought of rest is a welcome one. The good news is that that rest can start and be enjoyed before we die, whether death comes today or years from now. In addition, being in the Lord is held out as a possibility for any person on earth. This is good news indeed, because the Lord Jesus told how to start and continue times of rest in him.

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus said: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me … and you will find rest for your souls." The good news is that the Lord invites all who are weary, stressed out, anxious, fearful, tired, confused, oppressed by satanic forces, human systems or other humans to come to and continue in him not only to receive rest but to be set free. He said in John 8:31-32: "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

As we consider the challenges to life and peace in our homes, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our nation and the world, it cannot be denied that we need rest for our souls. Whether we've received Christ Jesus as our Savior and Lord or not, we do well to go to him for that rest, as the pressures of life in this world and our lives build up.

Receiving him is only the beginning of a relationship that promises rest and freedom. Continuing in his words is what makes living in him until we die a possibility with promise in the here-and-now and the hereafter, so that we can be among those classified as the "blessed, who die in the Lord, who rest from their labors and whose works follow them."

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 18, September 19, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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Cover: Keturah Gouldthorpe, a Mennonite Central Committee social worker from Mesa, Ariz., holds Louiza, a Brazilian girl who lives in a shantytown at the Olinda dump. Photo: Matthew Lester

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Stories of giving

I appreciated reading the articles detailing the stewardship journey of three different Indianapolis families ("Stories of Giving," Aug. 15). These families should be commended for their willingness to share openly with the wider church a topic that we often avoid. However, I was disappointed that a story wasn't also included about a family with less actual or earning potential. By limiting our storytelling to those with economic means, we narrow the truth of how the use of money (and the freedom to give it away) impacts all of us.

The church is diverse in many ways, and we're all called to be stewards of the resources given to us. The widow in Mark 12 was of limited means, but Jesus used her example as an object for all of us. Let's not make those with fewer material resources feel excluded or as if they have nothing to contribute. We're on this stewardship journey together—both rich and poor.—*Daniel Grimes, Goshen, Ind.*

Thank you for the inspiring and creative examples of generosity shared in the Aug. 15 issue ("Stories of Giving"). I was a bit surprised, though, to find only minimal reference to giving directed to closing the income gap among Mennonites in the global North and global South.

Mennonite World Conference recently reported that "95 percent of the financial wealth of Anabaptists remains with North Americans (88 percent) and Europeans (7 percent), while at least 60 percent of the 1.4 million baptized believers are in the global South (Asia, Latin America and Africa).

There seem to be three options for Mennonite giving that puts resources directly into the hands of our brothers and sisters in Christ in the global South. The first is Mennonite Central Committee's Global Family Program, which supports children and young adults in their education to build stronger communities around the world. The second is the Global Church Sharing Fund, which provides Mennonite churches in the global South with resources with "virtually no strings attached other than to 'build up the church.'" The third is through the Foods Resource Bank, which partners with MCC and is committed to providing food security in the developing world through sustainable small-scale agricultural production, and it does so in a unique way.

Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference recently challenged their members to give 2 percent of their income to the Global Church Sharing Fund. If the entire Mennonite church could give 2 percent or more to our neighbors in the global south, they might know we are Christians by our love. —*Joy Kauffman, Tiskilwa, Ill.*

Editor's note: Contributions for Mennonite World Conference's Global Church Sharing Fund can be mailed to US MWC at 2529 Willow Ave., Clovis, CA 93612 or with a credit card at www.mwc-cmm.org. Designate the contribution for GCSF.

Some wonder how it is that development officers can enjoy their jobs so much. The families included in your "Stories of Giving" (Aug. 15) provide the clue. We have the privilege of relating with people who are passionate about life-changing causes and who truly enjoy the opportunity to invest in important ministries of the church. The three families featured hint at the diversity of experiences that engender the charitable giving impacting almost everyone in our denomination and many throughout the world.

Some stories have an unexpected twist: in the coming years, students at Eastern Mennonite University will benefit from a generous gift from a Jewish attorney in Washington. What inspired him to contribute, he told me last month, is that "Mennonites seem to walk the talk" when it comes to teaching alternatives to violence.—*Tim Swartzendruber, Silver Spring, Md.*

Iranian president

I was dismayed to read David Shenk's Speaking Out ("The President of Iran to the U.S. President," Aug. 1). I agree with Shenk's fundamental point that we "need to find an alternative way forward as revealed in the teachings of Jesus Christ." However, a strong secondary theme of the article seemed to be to present Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in a positive light and the "leaders of liberal democracies" in a negative light.

IN THIS ISSUE

Mennonite Central Committee's Robb Davis asks a tough question: Is our goal with relief and service to move everyone to a level of consumption similar to where we in the global North are today (page 8)? He calls Mennonites around the world to look again at the year of Jubilee as the norm for the kingdom of God. In response to a long-running debate about worship styles in Mennonite congregations, spiritual director Gary A.T. Guthrie offers a "circle of sensibility" that illustrates different ways to understand Jesus (page 14). Finally, we note the congregational profile (page 16-17): Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Gainesville, Fla. We try to publish such a profile each quarter but are finding it difficult to get the photos and information to do so. Let us know if your congregation would like be featured.—*Editor*

I find that portrayal of President Ahmadinejad contrary to the known facts. Here are some of the things he has said during his short term in office: "As the imam said, Israel must be wiped off the map." "And God willing, with the force of God behind it, we shall soon experience a world without the United States and Zionism." He also has described the Holocaust as "a myth." Do these quotes sound like a man who has a "commitment to the Abrahamic God of justice?" If Anabaptists are looking for Muslim role models, let's be sure to find some better ones.—*Joel Reinford, Richmond, Va.*

Thanks for sharing David W. Shenk's pertinent article "The President of Iran to the U.S. President" (Speaking Out, Aug. 1). It's right on. We agree that the call to dialogue should be honored. Blessings upon the Mennonite and Iranian theologians who do believe in and practice dialogue. As we viewed President Ahmadinejad being interviewed by Mike Wallace, we were impressed with the Iranian President's humanity and made aware of the way U.S. media have projected a very dehumanizing image of him.—*David A. and Wilma Shank, Goshen, Ind.*

Donors want vision, not audited statements

In the Aug. 15 editorial ("Reservoir of Trust") Everett Thomas desires "information in the context of each institution's overall financial viability." I have serious doubt that there are many Mennonite institutions with "financial viability." Furthermore, it would be interesting to know what Thomas means by "overall financial viability."

In the several testimonials of generosity in the same issue, I did not see any reference to donors' quest for more financial information. In the donor testimonials and for the many donors I have invited to make gifts, the primary motive seemed to be sharing a common mission and values with the institution. Few people I have visited as prospective donors feel the need for the full audited financial statement Thomas desires. Donors generally want to know that an institution is operating with a compelling vision, has excellent programs and has leadership—CEO and board—exercising oversight with integrity. Donors and the constituency in general want to know that an institution is operating with a balanced budget—expenses usually being less than income. When circumstances change for an institution, which may be the result of internal and external factors, an institution's constituency expects leadership to take the necessary action to create change.—*Joseph L. Lapp, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Prayer options

I sympathize with Elizabeth Showalter for not accepting the rosary as an option when she was plagued with insomnia ("A Sacrament and a Song," Aug. 1). A Mennonite need not be encouraged to pray, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now until the hour of death. Amen." It is unfortunate that alternatives were not suggested, such as these examples: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, surround me with your loving care," and "Come Lord Jesus, walk life's road with me so that hope, joy and peace be mine." Also, the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23 or any other favorite Psalm or Bible verses can provide comfort.—*Kenneth Cressman, New Hamburg, Ont.*

Dismayed by disclaimer

I have been dismayed at the disclaimer following passionate Speaking Out columns such as "How Can Mennonites Support War?" (Sept. 5). If such a disclaimer needs to be placed in each issue, I suggest it be in the required publication information on page 2 or on the editorial page.

Think how it may feel to contributors to have those words follow what they write. When it follows what someone else has written, other readers may interpret the disclaimer as indicating your editorial position.—*Harold A. Shenk, Harrisburg, Md.*

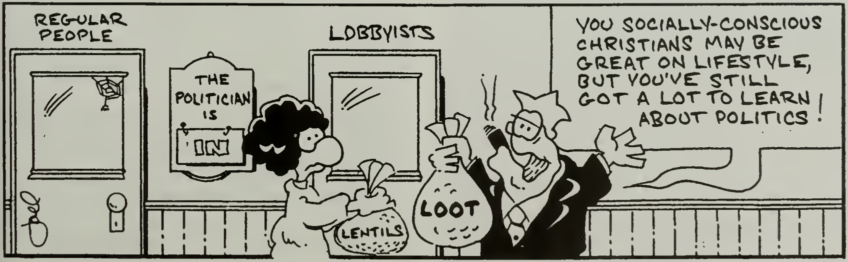
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I relate to Jesus primarily as a (77 votes):

- ○ friend (13%)
- ○ mystic (4%)
- ○ prophet (5%)
- ○ savior (60%)
- ○ teacher (18%)

Check out the new poll question at www. TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


REGULAR PEOPLE
THE POLITICIAN IS IN
LOBBYISTS
LENTILS
LOOT
YOU SOCIALLY-CONSCIOUS CHRISTIANS MAY BE GREAT ON LIFESTYLE, BUT YOU'VE STILL GOT A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT POLITICS!

IN BRIEF

MCC calls for school kits

Mennonite Central Committee needs thousands of school kits this fall to meet requests for shipments to countries including Jordan, Honduras and Nicaragua. Of all the material MCC sends across the globe, school kits are the most pressing need. Some 26,000 kits will be sent to Jordan, and kits are still needed to fill that shipment. MCC is also sending kits to Haiti and Kazakstan. This year, MCC has also shipped roughly 26,000 school kits to Iraq and 8,600 kits to Afghanistan.—*MCC*

20th year of the Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center

The Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center at Bluffton (Ohio) University celebrates the beginning of its 20th year of teaching peace on World Peace Day, held annually on Sept. 21. In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly recognized the need to set aside a date to celebrate world peace, but it wasn't until 2001 that Sept. 21 was declared the official World Peace Day, or the International Day of Peace. Organizations, individuals and nations around the world take time to reflect on the importance of striving to live together peacefully. The Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center was founded on April 7, 1987, by Elizabeth Hostetler. —*Bluffton University*

MDS to follow up with projects in Buras, La.

BURAS, La.—As Mennonite Disaster Service gears up to start new projects in Buras, devastated by the storms of last year, MDS remembers work it did in the area not long after the storm.

For those months, about 40 MDS volunteers per week served in Buras, putting a new roof on Lighthouse Fellowship, setting up a temporary kitchen, building showers and making it functional. During the cleanup, MDS brought together members of the congregation of Lighthouse Fellowship at three different times for discussions on recovery. Congregants at that time were spread out in six or more shelters and locations in four different states. Groups were brought together again earlier this summer to discuss losses, grief and survival issues.

Keith Amstutz of Pulaski, Iowa, worked as a volunteer in Buras, as well. He says going to the area provided a moral boost. "Everything was pretty bleak, we started cleaning out houses; I think we were the first ones there. ... There are super people down there. People who have been there for generations."

Today, drinking water needs to be brought into Buras, and building supplies and groceries can only be obtained some 60 miles away.

Jerry Klassen, Gulf States coordinator for MDS, says, "We are definitely making plans to set up again in October." The significant challenges to even starting projects include getting case and paperwork done. "Now we are in a stage where land ownership issues need to be straightened out."

Another challenge is funding. A person whose home was destroyed or badly damaged may be able to receive around $14,000 from insurance or FEMA, but the actual funds needed for repairs could easily exceed $30,000, putting the average homeowner in a difficult position, save for help from outside sources.

MDS is putting into motion the necessary things to have projects in Buras, including the development of its camp—where volunteers can reside, eat, sleep. MDS is also working on preparing leadership.—*MDS*

The Tribune-Democrat

Up on the roof

Pastor Don Hamsher, left, and assistant pastor Keith Yoder of Kaufman Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa., spent about 20 hours on the roof of the church in late August, capping off their church's year-long effort to raise money for Penny Power, an initiative to collect spare coins for Mennonite Central Committee, and bringing the congregation's total donation to more than $10,000.—*MCC*

Urban mission advocate Edward Taylor dies

CLEVELAND—Edward C. Taylor had no qualms about challenging the Mennonite Church to respond to urban mission. For a decade he was a leader in Mennonite Board of Missions' urban-ministry programs. He worked to build collaboration between congregations and conferences for existing and new programs. Taylor was also an advocate for minority groups, especially in areas of church leadership.

Edward C. Taylor

Taylor died on Aug. 24 at the age of 83.

When he took on the role of associate secretary for Mennonite Board of Missions (a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network) in its Home Missions department, Taylor was ready to see the Mennonite Church grow in urban areas.

"We must not be afraid to proclaim that Christ is in our midst and is calling us to a different lifestyle and commitment," Taylor said in the April 1979 issue of *Sent*, a magazine about people in mission.

Taylor was born July 1, 1923, in Dublin, Ga., to Florence Stanley and Ambrose Taylor. His family soon moved to Cleveland, where he lived and worked until his death.

Taylor became a Christian at age 26. Through a Cleveland citywide youth program he met Vern Miller, then pastor at Lee Heights Community Church. In 1976, Taylor and Miller worked together to establish Cleveland Heights Mennonite Church.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

36 students receive MMA College Scholarship

GOSHEN, Ind.—Thirty-six students across the United States have learned how being a good steward can pay off, especially when it comes to college bills.

MMA announced they were recipients of the

Thomas Lehman

arden mends a murder

uke Sumiyoshi, Fred Bahnson, Meredith Stewart and iel Felts stand near the Anathoth Garden barn as iiyoshi waters a compost pile. The murder in 2004 of a l North Carolina shopkeeper in an interracial marriage ed racial tensions in the farming community. Some want- evenge, but Cedar Grove United Methodist Church sought ay to rebuild the community. A nearby two-acre garden was offered for that purpose, and Fred and Elizabeth nson, active members of the Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite owship, have led the development of Anathoth Garden. n Cedar Grove sought leadership for the garden project, was offered the job. Much of the food goes without cost eedy residents of the surrounding area, as many as 150 ple in the garden's first season. Some are migrant workers no other access to land.—*Thomas Lehman*

MMA College Scholarship, a program that encourages young people to explore the concept of biblical stewardship. To be considered for the awards, 88 students from across the country submitted essays on stewardship and how it impacts them.

One student received the $2,500 Howard Brenneman College Scholarship, named for the retired MMA president who was passionate about holistic stewardship. Three students received $1,500, 10 received $1,000, and 22 received $500 for the 2006-2007 school year.—*MMA*

Israeli military abducts Palestinian mayor

BEIT UMMAR, West Bank—At 2 a.m. on Aug. 24, Miriam (Im Musa) Alqam heard loud knocking on the door. Israeli soldiers who had come in six jeeps surrounded the family home in the farming village of Beit Ummar, just north of Hebron.

The children (ages 4 to 14) were still sleeping when the soldiers took their father away in his night clothes, refusing his request to use the bathroom or to get a change of clothes from his closet.

Farhan Alqam (Abu Musa) is the mayor of Beit Ummar. He is the most recent of the Hamas-elected officials the Israeli army has abducted and imprisoned without charges.

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) workers Christina Gibb, John Lynes and Dianne Roe visited the Alqam family two days later.

On Aug. 3, at CPT's request, Mayor Alqam had hosted 30 internationals representing several different Christian organizations visiting Israel and Palestine. He had described the difficulties his village faced because of the U.S. and Israeli sanctions on the Palestinian Authority.

Mayor Alqam had good working relationships with international and Israeli peace and human rights groups. At the time of his arrest, he was inviting former President Jimmy Carter to visit Beit Ummar. President Carter and his wife, Rosalyn, visited the village in the early 1980s.

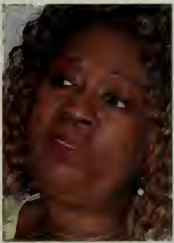
CPT has had a relationship with Beit Ummar for 10 years.—*CPT*

Gulf business gets boost from MEDA and MDS

NEW ORLEANS—Betty Cornin, an aspiring restaurateur in hurricane-ravaged New Orleans, says, “If you cook good food, people will come.”

Cornin wants to start a soul-food restaurant serving biscuits, stew, catfish, chicken, ribs and snap beans. With no experience running her own company, she came to Adele London, business advisor for Back to Business, a new program of Mennonite Economic Development Associates in partnership with Mennonite Disaster Service.

London guided her through the various steps, like checking with state officials to make sure her proposed company name—Taste Like Mama's—was not already being used by someone else. Cornin also gathered startup data, made cost projections and obtained insurance quotes. Her next step is to investigate local codes and regulations for grease traps, cooking hoods and ventilation systems.



Betty Cornin

“Whatever you want to do, I'll help you facilitate it,” London told her.

London has held her first series of Back to Business training classes for a dozen fledgling entrepreneurs, most of them African-American women who want to start home-based companies like selling nutritional supplements or online hair care products.

Plans call for a new set of students every two months, helping them gain a foothold in business. She also hopes to facilitate an extension of a Contractors College which another project is running.—*Wally Kroeker*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

Shenk named FTE Fellow

Timothy H. Shenk, a student at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., has been named a 2006 Undergraduate Fellow by the Fund for Theological Education. He is one of 70 students from across the country who have been awarded a fellowship as part of the Fund's efforts to encourage gifted young people to explore ministry as a vocation. Shenk is a senior liberal arts major with minors in history, psychology and Bible and religion and was a member of the EMU cross-cultural group to the Middle East last spring. He is the son of Keaton and Betty Shenk of Harrisonburg and a member of Community Mennonite Church.—*Eastern Mennonite University*

Networks to air documentaries

Four documentaries (one new, three rebroadcast) from Mennonite Media are airing in the next months. *Hunger No More: Faces Behind the Facts* aired on NBC stations beginning Sept. 10. *Shadow Voices: Finding Hope in Mental Illness* will air on Hallmark Oct. 8. *Fierce Goodbye: Living in the Shadow of Suicide* will air on ABC affiliates beginning Jan. 7, 2007. More information on each program is available at mennomedia.org. A new documentary, *Building on Faith: Making Poverty Housing History*, will air also on NBC beginning Dec. 10.—*Mennonite Media*

Is our goal to move everyone to a level of consumption similar to where we in the global north are today?

where are we

by Robb Davis

Could it be that our southern brothers and sisters could enrich us spiritually?

In his book *A High Price for Abundant Living: The Story of Capitalism,* Henry Rempel, a Canadian Mennonite economist, asks, "What do we mean by progress?" He goes on to describe how our economic system provides incentives for constant technological change without asking about its purpose. Later he returns to the subject of progress: "Society has not defined progress. We are working longer and rushing onward without deciding where we want to go. … We have tried to avoid the issue by elevating progress to a matter of faith." Rempel is asking: Where are we going with this growth, this progress, this global economic machine? In a similar way perhaps it is time we ask ourselves about our efforts in "development": Where are we going with this drive to reduce poverty, this work to bring sustainable change to the least, this cup of cold water given in Christ's name?

Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC's) identity is the relief, development and peace-building agency of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America. This is who we are, but where are we going with this? Who needs development and why? How far are we trying to go? Will we know what development looks like if or when we accomplish it? In one sense some of these questions are easy to answer. We are trying to address global poverty; we are working for a more just distribution of resources; we are working to save and improve the lives of the downtrodden, the poor and the oppressed. While no doubt true, these answers mask a host of challenges and further questions: How far do we take this? Is our goal to move everyone to a level of consumption similar to where we in the global North are today? Is it our goal to make the world safe for northern-style consumerism? A television in every home? Two cars in every garage? An iPod for every teen?

going?

Who needs development and why?

Economic calculus: These questions focus on the narrow economic development piece of our work, but what is true human development? Is an economic calculus all or mostly what matters? Do those of us who have experienced a high level of economic development need to be "developed" in other ways? In what ways are we poor? One way of thinking about these questions is to think in terms of gradients of inequality and moving resources from those who have them to those who need them—moving resources down a gradient of inequality to create greater equality and reduce the gradient.

Traditionally, MCC has been a conduit for moving resources down a gradient of economic inequality from those who have them to those who could benefit from them. In this sense, MCC is enabling a transfer of economic resources in the hope of improving the living condition of those in poverty. Our role has been largely about transfers of one kind—economic, in one direction: north to south. But are there other gradients of inequality that run in other directions? In what ways is the north poor and the

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

south rich? Could it be that MCC should also be enabling a transfer of social or spiritual wealth from the south to the north?

We rarely ask these questions because we tend to view progress (per Rempel's description) in fairly narrow economic terms. Common measures of progress (GDP, GNI, per capita GNI) are all economic and thus measure growth in only one dimension of poverty. Economic growth is something governments have invested millions of dollars measuring ever more accurately, and as a result the world has come to define development in fairly narrow economic terms.

But what of our spiritual poverty, our functional atheism, our belief in progress or technology versus our trust in God? Could it be that our southern brothers and sisters could enrich us spiritually? What of our social poverty, our anomie and narcissism? Could our southern brothers and sisters help us develop our social selves? What would that look like? How would we measure success? These questions should make us think about what development means and what a Mennonite agency engaged in development should think about its role. Is it time to redefine the work of MCC as we redefine what we mean by development?

What would it look like for Mennonites the world over to live and model Jubilee in the world today? What would happen? What risks would we have to take?

Why the poor remain so: These are the broader questions of development, but I must return to my original question about where we are going even in the domain of economic development. Beyond the questions about other gradients of inequality we must ask where we are going as an agency in terms of the economic development we are promoting. What is most important to us? Being able to say that we "sacrificed" to make economic transfers? Talking about how much we raised to help the poor and suffering? Or is it in seeking an answer to the question of why the poor remain so year after year? Why, in the midst of unprecedented global wealth creation over the past three to four generations, do so many still go to bed hungry, so many children still die unnecessarily. Why does violence continue to drive many to further suffering and despair?

What do our brothers and sisters in the global South expect of those of us who live in the wealthiest nation history has ever known? Do they expect only transfers, or do they want more? As an organization MCC has at its disposal the intellectual and financial resources to engage a broad and deep process of learning and discernment about where we are going with this, what the causes of poverty are, how the global economy rewards and punishes people; what the factors are that keep people poor; what the consequences are of hyperconsumption. Beyond this, MCC has the resources to engage a broad range of actors—from politicians to business people to laborers to people in our churches—in a debate over the justice of our economic system and how our production and consumption systems in the north influence poverty in the south. We have the potential to sponsor a fundamental debate and inquiry into an Anabaptist theology of economics.

Should we use our resources in this way? Should we continue to be a transfer organization or one that calls into question the fundamentals of the world economic order? Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4 ends with a statement that refers to announcing the favorable year of the Lord. Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder helped us understand that Jesus was talking about the concept of Jubilee—a transformative practice that was meant to reset the Jewish social, economic and political process on a regular basis. Jesus was saying that in his emerging kingdom, Jubilee was to be the norm, the status quo. What would it look like for Mennonites the world over to live and model Jubilee in the world today? What would happen? What risks would we have to take?

I offer the support of MCC to the global church to begin a process to discover what it will mean. Our unique contribution as an agency is not to continue in the way of dozens of other faith-based agencies to simply move resources down a gradient of economic inequality. Our unique contribution at this time is to enable the global church to build a praxis (practice and reflection) of Jubilee living that will signal to the world that the inexorable reign of Jesus is underway.

Robb Davis is executive director of Mennonite Central Committee.

One morning

by Thomas Showalter

To be honest, I don't remember a lot:
Instead of going to Latin, we went
To the cafeteria and watched the TV.
America was in flames,

The images expanding in our minds
Until the world was smoke, shouting,
Feet on concrete, then two buildings
Falling mysteriously, like old men.

We spoke casually, crossed legs,
Talked about taking the high road,
But our voices were hushed, reverent.
Looking back, I imagine my hands shook.

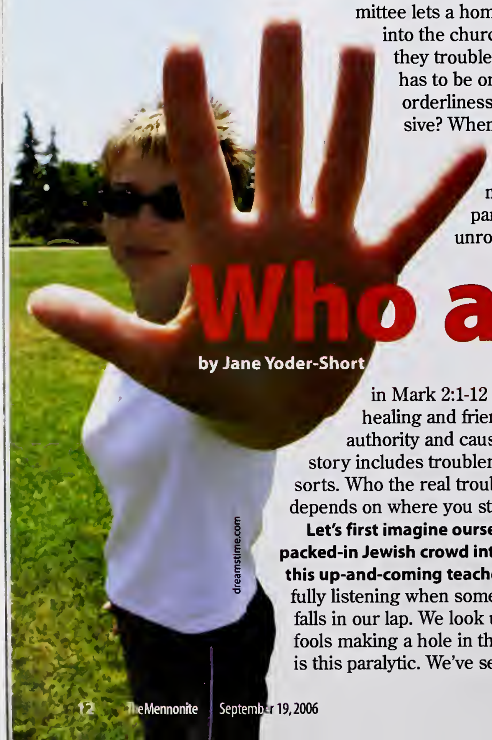
I drove home that day silent, staring,
Watched the road drag me home.
I did not cry. I understood for the first time,
I think, that I was young, the world old.

Thomas Showalter lives in Stillwater, Okla.

A reflection on Mark 2:1-12

Who are the troub

by Jane Yoder-Short


dreamstime.com

The farm where I grew up had a fascinating silo with a series of inside doors. Each door had two bars that served as rungs to a ladder to get to the top. My mother was a worrier and limited my climbing into the silo only when the silage was down to the last three doors. This was a safe distance. If I fell, she said, I might break a leg, but I'd live to tell the story. One evening, during chores, my father, less cautious, allowed me to go considerably higher than my usual limit. Mom found out. Who was the troublemaker—my father, who overstepped Mom's authority? I, who risked safety? Or my mother, who probably worried too much?

Finding the troublemaker can be confusing. Deciding who has authority can be unsettling.

Who has authority in the church family? Who has the power to preach or teach or choose what songs we sing? In Mennonite circles, authority is often organized in committees, but what if someone bypasses the committee? What if someone not on the worship committee organizes special music? What if someone not on the mission committee lets a homeless family move into the church basement? Are they troublemakers? There has to be order. When does orderliness become oppressive? When does staying safe impair life?

The familiar narrative of the paralytic and his unroofing friends told in Mark 2:1-12 is not only about healing and friendship but about authority and causing trouble. The story includes troublemakers of various sorts. Who the real troublemaker is depends on where you stand in the story.

Let's first imagine ourselves as one of the packed-in Jewish crowd intent on hearing this up-and-coming teacher. We're thoughtfully listening when some mud and thatch falls in our lap. We look up to see some fools making a hole in the roof. With them is this paralytic. We've seen him down at the market with his "Anything will help" sign, interrupting our shopping with the stench of poverty and causing us unneeded discomfort. He probably was paralyzed from some drunken roofing accident. As we clean the mud and poverty off our garments, we know the rude paralytic and his persistent friends are troublemakers.

But are they the troublemakers, or are they the kind of friends we want, friends willing to take a few risks, friends willing to be inconvenienced in order to help?

There are other candidates for troublemakers. How about those presumptuous scribes, the ones who have God figured out? With their expertise in Torah they seem to have their doves all in a row. They know how many doves you have to buy to return to a state of purity. They know who's in and who's not.

But are they the troublemakers, or do they just care deeply about their rich Jewish faith. They want it preserved. They want to keep people safe. No use risking sin when it comes to God's law.

When we imagine seeing Jesus from the point of view of the scribes, we realize Jesus is working outside the proper channels, acting as if he is his own committee. Any doubt that he is a troublemaker is erased when he starts pronouncing sins as forgiven. As scribes we know forgiveness is in the domain of God—and in the system of law and sacrifice. The temple system of forgiveness is working—it's worked for ages. Why change it? The idea of someone outside the religious system offering forgiveness is subversive and scary. What will happen to our faith and our authority if Jesus starts handing out forgiveness willy-nilly? It will be chaos. The temple will fall apart. In the eyes of the scribes, Jesus is the troublemaker par excellence.

Jesus sees the situation differently. He sees the paralytic not as an unclean cripple but as a man caught in shame and guilt, and Jesus frees him, forgives him. To forgive can also be translated "to free" or "to let go." Jesus returns the man's sense of self-worth. He frees him to be something more than a smelly paralytic.

Jesus makes no mention of sacrificial offering or burning incense or buying doves or even con-

Forgiveness enables us to live lives not focused on falling or failing but on God's love and mercy.

fession of sins. He oversteps the day's protocol when he says, "Son, your sins are forgiven." What is he thinking? Had he chosen his words more carefully he might have avoided trouble. If Jesus had said, "In the name of the God of Abraham your sins can be forgiven," he might have avoided the clash with the theologians.

Then Jesus asks an interesting question. Troublemakers tend to ask unwanted questions. Jesus asks "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'?

Which is easier, forgiveness or healing? Was Jesus trying to say the temple system dished out forgiveness without healing? Was he saying it's wrong to think that healing is more difficult than forgiveness? Was he trying to get everyone to think about the relationship of sin and sickness?

The crowd of that day thought sin and sickness were linked, but we know from Jesus' encounter with the blind man that he did not believe sin was the sole cause of affliction. We also know Jesus saw healing as more than physical. It was restoration with God and the surrounding community.

The man in this story was probably paralyzed inwardly and outwardly. He was inwardly paralyzed from people around him thinking he had sinned. He was paralyzed by a temple system that left him thinking he was unclean, a system that, because of his disability, limited his access to holy spaces and prevented him from being an insider.

Most of us are not paralyzed physically, but we can become paralyzed inwardly. We can be paralyzed by having to be successful, having to be someone. We can be paralyzed by having to appear sinless. We can be paralyzed by fear—of sickness, terrorists, a reckless president. Forgiveness reaches across the lines of fear and illness and heals our inward paralysis.

makers?

Forgiveness is life-giving. There is no bed to roll up or walking with once disabled legs. But forgiveness enables us to roll up desire to get even. Forgiveness empowers us to walk without worrying whether people are talking about our old failures and our past sins. Forgiveness enables us to live lives not focused on falling or failing but on God's love and mercy.

Forgiveness also gets us in trouble. Forgiveness and healing outside the proper channels got Jesus in trouble. In the very next chapter of Mark, we hear of a plot to destroy Jesus. The solution for troublemakers is often found in violent removal.

What if we stop seeing violence as a solution for those we fear and begin to forgive generously?

In our society since 9/11, forgiveness seems out of vogue. Our leaders promote using violence to save us from evil and heal our fears. Our nation, like the scribes, has a vested interest in power. We don't want our top-dog position to change. We try to appear as a "good nation" interested in people's safety, but inwardly we are paralyzed by unforgiving pride.

Our national leaders don't want people to forgive willy-nilly. Forgiveness would short circuit violence and vengeance.

Which is easier, saying, Your sins are forgiven or, Take up your mat and walk. Jesus said, But so you know that God can cure whatever ails you, I say to you, Take up your bedroll and live as forgiven people.

Forgiveness is not easy. Sometimes we'd rather stay paralyzed, but God's grace abounds, and we move beyond our smelly old selves. With God's mercy we walk as forgiven and forgiving people.

As forgiving people we become troublemakers, not just to make waves but a special kind of troublemaker. We are troublemakers like the four friends who were not afraid to go to extreme measures to open the way to see Jesus. Like the four friends,we accept people for who they are—not who society says they are. The smell of poverty does not stop our friendship. Like the four friends, we have faith that life can be different, that Jesus will make a difference. Like the four friends, our love makes us unroofers. Our love makes us brave and foolish and troublemakers.

As forgiven and forgiving people, we are troublemakers like Jesus. Like Jesus, we invite people to be free from what is holding them back, free from their old stinky bedrolls. Like Jesus, wanting to stay safe does not control us. Like Jesus, we look beyond the power equations. We open fences that limit access to God.

May we take up our beds and dance a dance of forgiveness in a world paralyzed by unforgiveness. May we grow as forgiven, forgiving troublemakers.

Jane Yoder-Short is a member at East Union Mennonite Church, Iowa.

dreamstime.com

The Holy Spirit speaks to us u

What spiritua

by Gary A.T. Guthrie

I wanted to flee the worship service as soon as the praise band and choir started their singing. Why do some people like to worship a certain way and others want to flee once they sit down to a new worship experience?

Several articles in *The Mennonite* highlight some of these differences and desires in our worship experiences. Marlene Kropf (Feb. 17, 2004) reflects on a sudden prophetic reading of Amos 5:21-24 when shouted from the back of her church: "I had never before heard such profound disappointment and fierce anger in God's voice as I did that Sunday morning. When the text was allowed to be proclaimed with prophetic passion, it was as though we heard an utterly new voice in worship. Later I wondered what other voices may be rarely admitted into Mennonite worship." She goes on to add: "On Easter morning our sanctuaries reverberate with joyful songs and profound alleluias. Yet on most of the rest of the Sundays of the year, our praise may be more tepid."

Ron W. Adams (Oct. 18, 2005) comments after taking an eight-day silent retreat: "Most Sundays, we come to worship from the clamor of work and family, out of breath from rounding up the children and out of patience from the drive. By the time we get to worship, we want some peace and quiet." He later comments, "We need more silence in our lives."

Each of us brings strengths to the church. We need all voices heard if the body of Christ is to be healthy and whole.

Heidi Regier Kreider (March 16, 2004) comments on music in the church: "Hymn singing is important, dear to our heart, and therefore a source of strong opinions, feelings and, not surprisingly, conflict in the church." She goes on to talk about the conflict between "contemporary" and "traditional" worship styles.

I believe the Holy Spirit speaks to us using different "languages." If we are missing different voices in our worship experience, perhaps it is because we have chosen not to learn the spiritual language of the other. We are born with one of these languages, and it is what we use to communicate our passion for God, our spirituality, to our community and world.

The Circle of Sensibility: Urban T. Holmes developed a spiritual typology (see figure on page 15) that can help us understand these differences. It holds all this together by keeping Jesus at the center. Corinne Ware in her book *Discover your Spiritual Type, a Guide to Individual and Congregational Growth* (The Alban Institute) further develops the tool to look at congregational spirituality.

She asks how we remain faithful to the church yet remain an individual and take risks. Jesus was fully Jewish, yet he took risks and became a prophet. He chose the life of the Spirit, and the four spiritual types is one way to understand how God's Spirit was manifested in his life and is currently manifested in ours.

Implications: Growing up, I was an emotional boy. My father, who has said that given a new opportunity he would love to be a biblical scholar, didn't understand this son who was all heart. At 40 years old, when I was introduced to the Circle of Sensibility, I finally understood why we didn't understand one another. We didn't speak the same "language." If I wanted a closer relationship with my father, I needed to move closer to the middle, where Jesus is. I needed to engage my head and learn his language of the spirit.

Each of us feels more comfortable in one of the spiritual types.

When I worship, I feel more at home with some silence. Others feel more at home with praise music or a powerful, prophetic sermon or a good teaching on the Bible. It explains why some of us resonate with some devotionals but not others. It is important we learn to walk and communicate in all four spiritual types if we desire to grow and mature in our faith by keeping Jesus at the center.

I know a pastor who was rooted in the Jesus as Mystic tradition. He moved to a church whose predominant spirituality was Jesus the Teacher. He

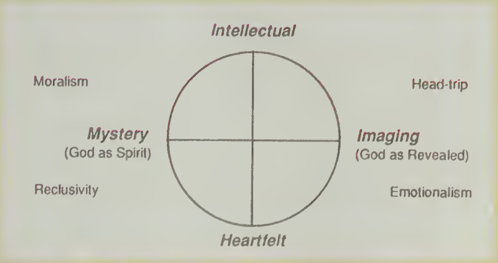
different 'languages.'

anguage do you speak?

didn't last longer than a year because it was not a good fit. What would happen if pastors knew their spirituality types, and the congregations knew theirs? Congregations could openly choose a pastor who was different to challenge them or accept someone who fit their own type better. Knowing and discussing each of their spiritual types could lead to good discussion and avoid tension. One Mennonite congregation felt a lot of internal tension when during the 1970s a number of members were involved in the Charismatic prayer movement. This was simply a desire by some in the congregation to express their language in a different style of worship. That same congregation has felt similar tension when it went to two services, with one more liturgical in nature. Again this is part of the congregation wanting to experience the mystery side of God.

Elaine Bryant (Jan. 24) noted that she received a plaque from Mennonite Mission Network and the Urban Leaders Network that spoke of "integrating evangelism with reconciliation and justice." This is a sign she was able to integrate the Jesus as Friend and Jesus as Prophet spiritualities. The evangelical witness needs to be grounded in the societal reality that surrounds them. The prophet needs the personal relationship with Christ if he or she is to remain faithful to their witness over the long haul. The Bible scholar needs a heartfelt experience of God, not just through the Word. The contemplative needs community to be mindful that their experience of God is not the only experience of God.

This is the meaning of the body of Christ. Each of us brings strengths to the church. We need all voices heard if the body of Christ is to be healthy and whole. We can't afford to kick the prophets out of our congregations because they make us uncomfortable. We need silence in our lives if we are to hear "the still quiet whisper" of God. We need the scholars to help us understand how God not only was involved in the world in the past but how we understand God working in our world today. And we need Jesus as our friend and personal Savior because keeping Jesus at the center of our lives is what gives us joy and life to continue the journey of discipleship.



The Circle of Sensibility

The Holy Spirit is constantly working in our lives and in the church by renewing our spirits in four basic ways. Starting with the upper right quadrant and going clockwise we have:

Theological renewal or Jesus the Teacher. (Look at Mark 4:26-33 as an example of this spiritual type.) Theological renewal "produces theological reflection and crafts position papers on ethical issues. It supports education and publication and causes us to examine the texts of our hymns to see if we are singing what we actually believe." Bible scholars most often resonate with this type of spirituality. The excess is head trips.

Personal renewal or Jesus the Friend (John 11:33-44). Here we move from the head to the heart but with a continued emphasis on the revealed God, often through Scripture. The personal relationship with Christ is stressed, and joyous praise music is used. Witnessing to the Good News and testimonials are often a part of worship and outward evangelization. The Charismatic movement is rooted in this type. The excess is emotionalism.

Spiritual renewal or Jesus the Mystic (Matthew 4:1-11). "Disciplines of emptying oneself and silent contemplative prayer are encouraged. This type often produces some of the best spiritual writers over the years and are often reformers of churches. Think Henri Nouwen, John of the Cross" and the Anabaptist Michael Sattler. The excess is quietism.

Societal renewal or Jesus the Prophet (Luke 4:13-19). This emphasizes the prophetic tradition. This spirituality asks us to fully put into practice what Jesus preached. Do we feed the hungry and take care of the poor and orphans? Their zeal is never-ending until there is justice established. The excess is moralism."

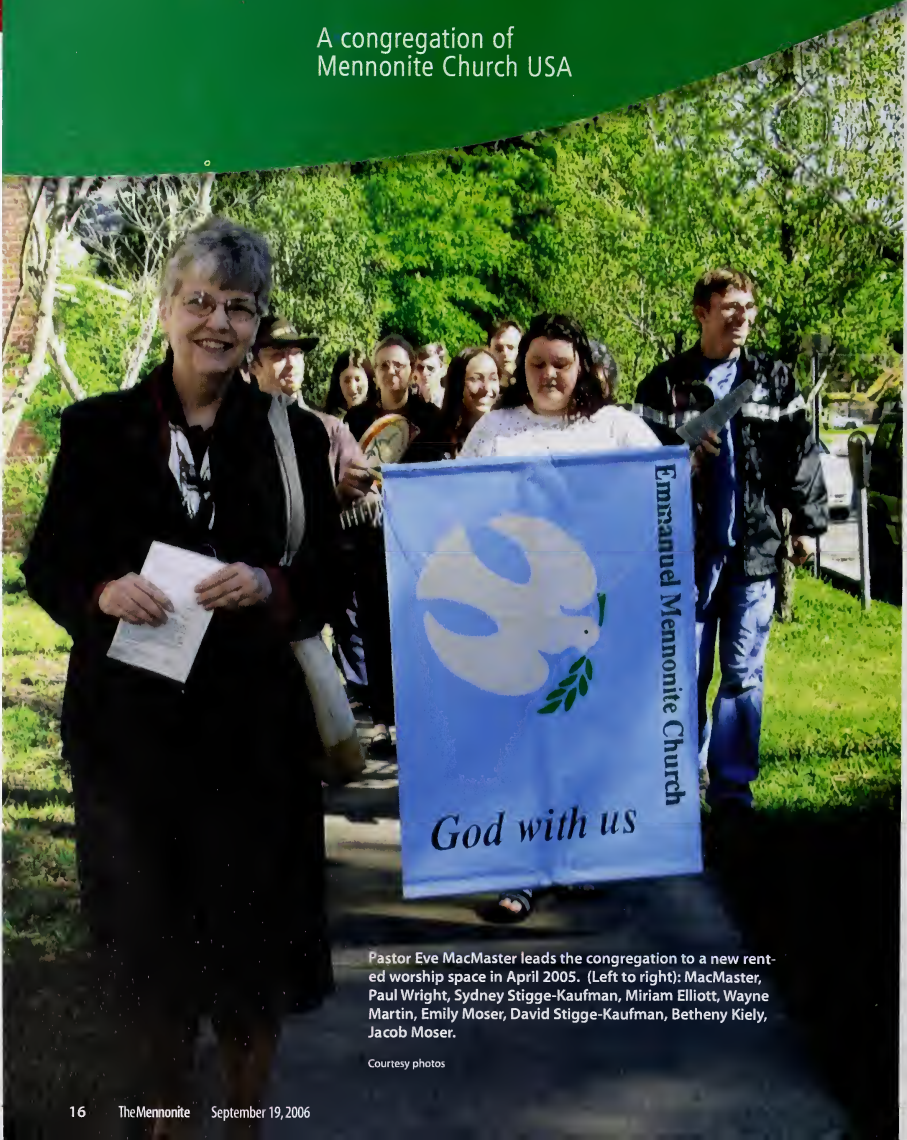
The author feels the ideal is to move away from the edges of the circle where we find the excesses and toward the center, where Jesus is and lived out his life.

(All quotes are by Corinne Ware in *Discover Your Spiritual Type*.)

Gary is an associate member of Des Moines Mennonite Church. He practices spiritual direction and also operates a community supported agriculture vegetable farm near Nevada, Iowa.

Emmanuel Mennonite Church

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA



Pastor Eve MacMaster leads the congregation to a new rented worship space in April 2005. (Left to right): MacMaster, Paul Wright, Sydney Stigge-Kaufman, Miriam Elliott, Wayne Martin, Emily Moser, David Stigge-Kaufman, Betheny Kiely, Jacob Moser.

Courtesy photos

Autumn Durando (l
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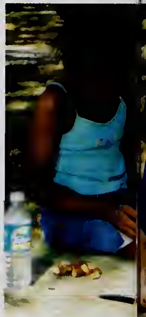
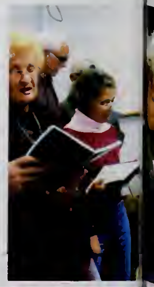


Rayna Bradley (left)
with Paul Wright du



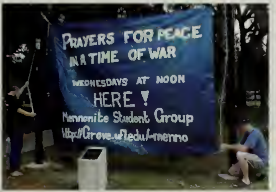
Rodel (right) enjoy Ginny Campbell's Lego
ugh a roof to Jesus.

ones (right) enjoy an outdoor Bible study
egational retreat in March.

Episcopal priest Jim Wright (front left) and Eve MacMaster (front right)) lead a community silent prayer on the third anniversary of the beginning of the Iraq War in March.

Below: congregational singing in April.

A July 2005 picnic at Pat Galiger's farm. Front row (left to right): Pat Galiger, Candy Ganyo, Jeff Hans Petersen, Heidi Hans Petersen, Kim Ferrero, Paul Wright, Paul Campbell. Second row: Phil Rittgers, Eve MacMaster, Dick MacMaster, Miriam Elliott, Sydney Stigge-Kaufman, Dave Stigge-Kaufman, Ann Corbin. Third row: Rose Marie Lewis, Ruth Rittgers, Ginny Campbell



Paul Wright (right), leader of the Mennonite Student Group, and Eve MacMaster (left) prepare to lead prayers for peace on the University of Florida campus in April 2004.

Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Gainesville, Fla., meets in space rented from a Christian study center, the fourth temporary facility since the church's founding in 1983. There are about 50 participants, some coming once a month from 50 and 80 miles away. Attendance is about 35. About half the participants are current or former University of Florida students or staff.

A member of Southeast Mennonite Conference, Emmanuel is the only Mennonite congregation in the area and includes people from a variety of denominations and perspectives. Only about a quarter of the participants come from ethnic Anabaptist backgrounds. Those who do not are interested in learning about Mennonites and Brethren.

The church has a history of activism, working locally with the homeless and doing public witness against the death penalty and racism. At least once per quarter, the congregation prepares and serves a home-cooked supper at St. Francis House, the local homeless shelter.

Every year members participate in the CROP walk against hunger and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day walk for racial justice. After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, Emmanuel invited local Muslim and Jewish leaders to speak to the congregation and invited the community to "peace potlucks" to hear speakers such as Kathleen Kern of Christian Peacemaker Teams.

Emmanuel's worship services display the creative gifts of the congregation, including a drama troupe and a bluegrass ensemble. Eve MacMaster, who has been pastor for the past five years, fosters relationships between the church and the broader community.—*Krista Ehst and Eve MacMaster*

Challenging journey to a new curriculum

Ron Rempel is executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network.

As I write this column in late August, news writers and cartoonists are having fun with the back-to-school theme. Churches are finalizing plans for the start of the Sunday school year. And we at Mennonite Publishing Network are talking with as many churches as possible to make sure they know about the new Gather 'Round Sunday school curriculum.

It's been a challenging journey so far. In the fall of 2003, while still emerging from several years of financial difficulties, Mennonite Publishing Network took a step of faith to become a cooperative publisher. The Sunday school curriculum is so important in shaping the identity and mission of our church, concluded our board, that we can't afford not to become involved. They expressed confidence that congregations and individuals would support the project by donating to the development costs. That has proven—and continues—to be true.

One of the most interesting challenges in the early months was to clarify the guiding principles. We assumed the centrality of Scripture and took time to develop comprehensive Bible outlines. We took time to reflect together on how children and youth come to faith. In writing Sunday school sessions, what do we assume about human nature and about how God works with humans? How can we take into account both human potential and sin while at the same time looking to Jesus as both Savior and example? What is the connection between faith and action? We talked with theologians and educators. We drafted and redrafted our statement of theological convictions. They became part of our spiritual reflexes as we worked with writers and talked with congregations about sample lessons and compared notes with colleagues in other denominations.

We also took care to consult the latest literature on how children and youth learn and to offer a range of response activities in keeping with different learning styles. We took seriously the feedback we had heard about the importance of the home and church connection, and we developed resources—such as the "talkabout" and a parent/caregiver unit—to help parents and Sunday school teachers become partners.

Take time to reflect on the statement of theological convictions as reproduced below. Read it aloud on your own and with others who are using the Gather 'Round curriculum. Let it become part of your spiritual reflexes as you participate in Christian formation programs in your church.

The good news embraced by this curriculum is that the God we worship is the One who created the world, sustains it and will bring it to completion. God's love for the world was embodied in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, through whom we are reconciled to God as we confess our sin and self-centeredness. The Holy Spirit guides and strengthens us to fulfill God's purposes for the world.

The biblical story teaches us that before we are conscious of God we are known by God, who loves us and invites us into relationship. As we grow and experience God's reconciling love and grace, we are led to respond in love and obedience. The Bible, the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of the gathered faith community guide us in living faithfully as followers of Jesus. Our service, mission and simple living are grateful responses to God's generosity. God intends us to participate in God's way by embracing peace and nonviolence and by seeking justice and wholeness for humanity and for all of creation.

God longs to be in relationship with all people: young and old, female and male, from every race, nation and religion. Precious and valued in God's family, children express their response to God's love in age-appropriate ways. As they mature, young people accept God's initiative of grace and respond through baptism and church membership. Accountable to the church community, they commit themselves to live in accordance with the life and teachings of Jesus.

Through teaching and example, adults in households and the congregation have the joy, privilege and responsibility to nurture Christian faith in our children and youth. Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News *is one tool our denominations offer for Christian formation in children, youth and adults. This curriculum can help individuals and church communities grow in love for God and others as we worship, learn, witness and serve.*

See www.gatherround.org for more information on the new curriculum.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Dwelling among those who hate peace**—Arthur Paul Boers
- **One mean Mennonite mama**—Valerie Weaver-Zercher
- **Is security possible?**—James R. Hertzler

Dustin Combs

Conference minister for Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference Jeff Wright (right) and Mennonite Mission Network's executive director Stanley Green provide a "release and blessing" during Goshen College's presidential inauguration. With Brenneman (left) are his wife, Terri J. Plank Brenneman, and their son Quinn.

Goshen College has new president

Brenneman inaugurated as 16th president at the Indiana school.

The inauguration of Goshen (Ind.) College's 16th president, James E. Brenneman, filled a weekend with moments of laughter, joy and celebration but also of ritual, worship and tradition. After being thrown into the college's fountain by students in the traditional presidential dunking (see photo below right), the new president culminated a weekend of inaugural activities with an address on Sept. 10.

In his remarks, Brenneman quoted Isaiah, Proverbs, Albert Einstein, Rachel Carson and Aristotle; he called wisdom and wonder the hallmarks of great Christian higher education institutions, which need to be continually nourished and developed.

"The spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, power and knowledge, spoken of by Isaiah, are the quintessential descriptors of the best educational institutions, secular and religious alike, known to humankind," Brenneman said. "But our educational task is not complete by simply becoming passionate learners of all that there is to know. ... Wisdom and understanding, counsel, power and knowledge must be embedded in the larger narrative of Scripture."

Brenneman contrasted cynicism with the Christian call to wonder and astonishment.

"Let us never lose our capacity for wonder. Though it is awfully tempting to become cynical while learning to be appropriately critical, one cannot be complacent or cynical and wonder at the same time. The wisdom of Isaiah invites us to live all our days in complete astonishment under the Spirit and wonder of the Lord."

Centered on the theme "Growing Wisdom and Wonder" and based on Isaiah 11:1-2, the ceremony was held in Sauder Concert Hall and attended by nearly 1,000 people.

After 33 delegates from other colleges and universities, and the Goshen College current and retired faculty, processed into the hall lit with candles and decorated with wreaths of flowers, the worship service included an invocation by Rosalind E. Andreas, chair of the Mennonite Education Agency board and the investiture by Virgil Miller, chair of the Goshen College Board of Directors.

Past presidents of the 112-year-old institution in attendance were J. Lawrence Burkholder (1971-1984), Victor Stoltzfus (1984-1995), Henry Weaver (interim president 1996), Shirley H. Showalter (1997-2004) and current Provost John D. Yordy (interim president 2004-2006).

Brenneman was named to the presidential post in December 2005 and formally began his term July 1.—*Jodi H. Beyeler of Goshen College*

Dustin Combs

Goshen College students (left to right) David Martinez, Libby Smith, Jon Brelsford and Caitlin Helmuth carry new president James E. Brenneman into the Schrock Plaza fountain during inauguration weekend. Brenneman wore flippers, a snorkel, goggles, a poncho and held an inflated shark. The tradition of dunking new presidents started in 1971, during President J. Lawrence Burkholder's inauguration weekend.

July gathering looks at role of women

Central American women theologians, Bible students gather in Costa Rica.

Seventy-three women from across Central America met in San José, Costa Rica, July 16-18 for a first gathering of women theologians and Bible students. The goal of the gathering was to talk about women's roles in the church and other areas. Future plans are to create an inventory of women's gifts. Other objectives included identifying the social/cultural/religious contexts of women in Central America, reflecting on biblical misinterpretations of women's roles in the life of the church and agreeing on specific actions.

After introductions and singing, participants were ready to hear about the role of women in the church in the Southern Hemisphere and developments in different parts of the world. Biblical reflections by Ofelia García of Mexico led women to profound thinking and delving into Scriptures.

In group discussions participants shared how they perceived themselves and their roles in church, family and society. Some women said their contributions were not accepted as equal to those of their brothers and that at church and at home, women's activities were seen as "women's matters."

Participants identified their need to expand their awareness of the social and family structures from which gender roles are promoted and to work on gender roles within the family. They identified themselves as agents of change.

"In this search for becoming true co-inheritors of grace, we are not alone," said García. "God is calling women to be partners, to expand the kingdom of God with our gifts, from our femaleness. We have to believe and own the truth that Jesus has called us."

Concepción Villeda, of Guatemala and Albania Romero, of Honduras were named co-chairs of a committee to continue the work begun at this gathering. Graciela Amador of Nicaragua was named secretary, and Sandra Campos will continue to serve as overseer.

"Without any doubt, this first meeting of Central American women theologians has been a great success," said Campos. "God has been faithful. He accompanied us through the whole process, and we trust that what is ahead is even better."

This gathering is part of a worldwide effort led by Mennonite World Conference to encourage and nurture women in theological training and pastoral ministries. Similar gatherings have been held in Africa since 1999. Funding for the Costa Rica meeting came from a variety of sources, including Mennonite Church Canada Witness, Rosedale Mennonite Missions, Canadian Women in Mission and Mennonite Central Committee.

Another major meeting of Central American Mennonites followed the gathering; it was called CAMCA (Consulta Anabautista Menonita de Centro América, or the Central American Anabaptist and Mennonite Consultation). In that meeting, Manuel Izaguirre proposed to CAMCA delegates that women be included as delegates with both voices and votes.

"[Women] understand God's kairos, the moment when the Spirit breathes new life into each of them," said Izaguirre.—*Milka Rindzinski of Mennonite World Conference from reports by Sandra Campos and Ofelia García*

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MCC team assesses Lebanon devastation

Nearly a million people displaced by the war between Hezbollah and Israel.

A Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assessment team observed massive destruction in Beirut and southern Lebanon while visiting communities affected by the recent war between Israel and Hezbollah.

The five-person team is planning MCC's ongoing aid response in Lebanon, where the war destroyed thousands of homes, displaced nearly a million people and caused about 1,300 deaths. MCC has already committed $166,000, including $40,000 to provide emergency assistance to people fleeing the fighting.

After arriving in Lebanon on Aug. 25, the team visited an area of Beirut that was devastated by Israeli air strikes. Ten-story apartment buildings were reduced to piles of concrete rubble. Areas as large as half a city block were leveled. Many of the buildings that still stood were heavily damaged.

Most residents fled southern Beirut during the war. Some left the city, stayed with relatives or rented an apartment in a safer area. Others filled Beirut's parks and schools by the thousands.

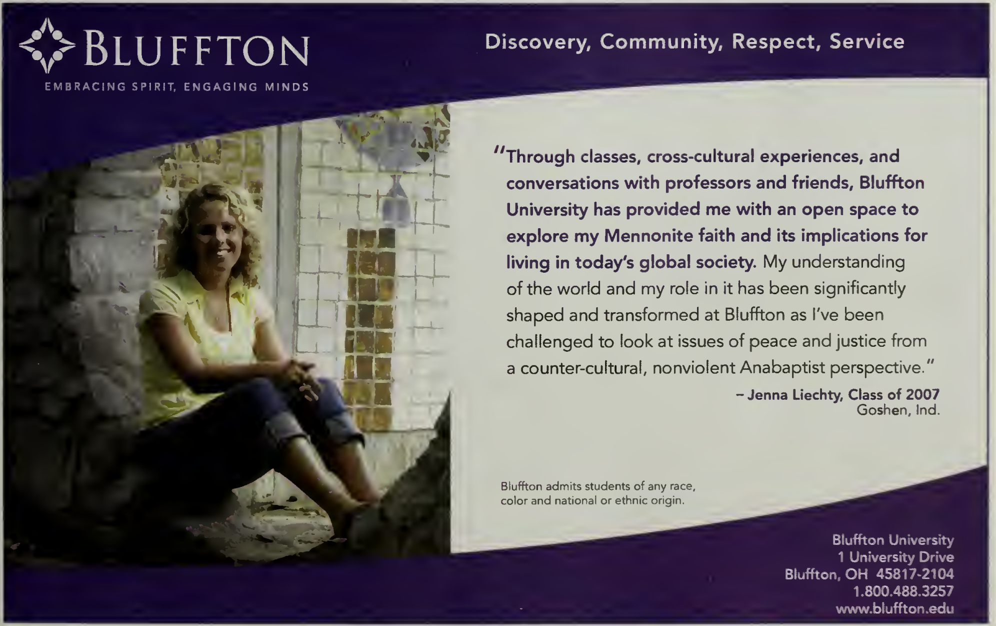
In the southern Lebanese city of Sidon, the assessment team met with Mayor Abdul Rahman Bizri and with staff members of Development for People and Nature Association, a partner organization that provided food and other assistance to thousands of displaced people during the war. A city of about 250,000, Sidon received more than 110,000 displaced people during the war. Many stayed in schools and other public buildings.

Farther south, the assessment team visited Qlayleh, a village of 6,000 near the Mediterranean coast. Israeli air strikes destroyed about 200 houses in the village and severely damaged 150. Eight people were killed and most fled north for the duration of the war.

Ahmad Sheble, a 74-year-old orange grower, fled Qlayleh with his wife, two adult children and 95-year-old mother on the second day of the conflict. They fled first to the nearby city of Tyre, then to Beirut—and when bombs fell too close to them in Beirut, they went into the mountains of eastern Lebanon. There, they rented an apartment at a rate of $100 per day.

"Thank God the [United Nations] Security Council made the cease-fire happen that day," Sheble says. "We couldn't afford to stay for another day. We could barely afford to get back."

The assessment team is made up of Janet and Rick Janzen, Betty Kasdorf and Bassam Chamoun. Tim Shenk, a writer in MCC's communication department, is accompanying the team.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*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– Jenna Liechty, Class of 2007
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Olympian describes HIV/AIDS program

Mennonite skater Cindy Klassen uses her fame in Nigeria and Ethiopia.

What struck Olympian athlete, Cindy Klassen, most when she visited several Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)-sponsored HIV/AIDs projects in Nigeria and Ethiopia this summer wasn't the painful poverty or the suffering—which admittedly was "hard to see"—but the joy-filled hospitality, deep faith and "incredible hope" of a people who meet their challenges head on.

"They are beautiful people inside and out," Klassen says, "always saying, 'You are welcome, you are welcome' [meaning they are happy to have you in their home] with me wanting to respond, 'Thank you! thank you!'"

The volunteer caregivers are impressive, Klassen says.

"One lady [in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia] started a store to help people and adopted a child. Also she was planning to marry a blind man who had AIDs so she could look after him and help him survive. She had so much faith in God and said she was not afraid to die since she'd go to heaven. She told us that wealthy people are often unhappy but that she finds peace and happiness in God."

Klassen says she did not know much about HIV/AIDS before her trip.

"It was really encouraging for me to see that when people go on medication, they function and live quite normally. For example, one woman was learning how to sew and to make a living with that.

"It's amazing what can happen. If you eat properly and get the medication, it can make so much of a difference. And people are excited about learning new trades and skills when they're offered support. … I could see the hand of God here," she says.

Asked why she chose MCC as an organization to support in this way, Klassen says, "It's kind of where my heart is. I'm Mennonite. I know it's a really good organization. So I jumped at the opportunity."

Asked how her newfound celebrity status is affecting her both spiritually and personally, she says, "Its strange, even weird, to get so much attention. I'm a shy, private person. So definitely it's a big change for me, and a challenge. But this is God's will for my life right now."

MCC has posted video clips of Klassen's trip on its AIDS Web site, aidscarenow.org, and will have a short video ready for distribution to churches this fall from MCC provincial offices.

The name of the program sponsoring the trip is "Generations at Risk."—*Leona Dueck Penner of* Canadian Mennonite

The Hesston College Advantage:

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Jordan Leichty started at Hesston, taking an active role on campus. Along with his studies, he served as a resident assistant in the dorm and a student ambassador for the admissions office. He worked with academic advisors at Hesston and Iowa State University (ISU), made a smooth transfer, and completed a degree in agricultural business in four years. Fresh from receiving his ISU diploma in May, Jordan led a two-month service trip to Thailand. He began work as a sprayer operator/salesman for Wellman (Iowa) Farm Center in September.

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Prof helps bring Uganda cease-fire

A longtime professor at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va., played a key role in the recent cease-fire negotiated in one of the most deadly war zones in the world, northern Uganda. Uganda borders Southern Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Hizkias Assefa, who has taught at EMU's Summer Peace-building Institute (SPI) for the last 11 years, co-facilitated the sensitive peace talks, working in tandem with the vice president of Southern Sudan, Riek Machar.

In this region, more than 100,000 people have been killed and 2 million displaced over the last 20 years, currently described as the globe's worst humanitarian catastrophe. Children have lived in fear of being abducted and forced to kill or be sex slaves. Farmers have been unable to grow desperately needed food.

"The truce is here," a Ugandan newspaper said. "The guns have finally fallen silent. The cessation of hostilities agreement signed on Aug. 27 between the Government and the Lord's Resistance Army took effect yesterday at 6 a.m. This is a landmark truce that could spell an end to the 20-year rebel insurgency in the north."

A veteran of 25 years of international peace work, Assefa has advanced degrees in law, economics and public and international affairs from two U.S. universities.

Writing on Aug. 17 from Juba, the capital of Southern Sudan, he noted that "face-to-face negotiations have been going on now for over a month. At this phase of the mediation process, since the only place where the top-level leaders of the insurgency group feel comfortable to meet the mediators is in the forests at the DRC-Sudan border, we have been conducting many meetings there, while the primary venue for the formal negotiation between the insurgents and the government delegates has been in Juba.

A breakthrough happened on Aug. 28, Assefa reported in a second round of correspondence with EMU colleagues.

"Yesterday, we signed an agreement on cessation of hostilities between the government and the insurgents that included significant elements of cease-fire and even the first steps towards demobilization," Assefa said. "We are also getting the insurgency group to agree to release the children under their control to humanitarian agencies. This end of fighting … will also allow the people in the horrendous displaced peoples camps to begin to return home with the assistance of the United Nations and other agencies.—*Bonnie Price Lofton of Eastern Mennonite University*

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•Editor@TheMennonite.org

•fax 574-535-6050

•1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794

CALENDAR

Saturday, Sept. 30, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. **CrossRoads (the Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center)** is sponsoring its annual ***Harvest Day*** at 711 Garbers Church Road, Harrisonburg, Va., featuring special activities for children and storytelling events for all ages. Activities include: riding in a horse-drawn carriage, painting pumpkins and gourds, making and tossing darts made from corncobs, grinding corn and feeding it to chickens, petting barnyard babies, boiling molasses from sorghum cane syrup, pressing cider from apples, sawing logs with a crosscut saw and watching thread being spun from flax and wool, bed covers being quilted and woven, nails and clothes hooks being crafted by blacksmiths, and listening to master storytellers and gifted musicians. Tasty homemade foods and drinks will be available. Entrance fee is $8 per car load.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Beiler, Victoria Caryn, Aug. 8, to Christopher and Megan Martin Beiler, Gap, Pa.

Blough, Kira Ann, Aug. 22, to Cedric and Rebecca Schulz Blough, Moundridge, Kan.

Buller, Elsie Ann and **Elyza Mae** (twins), Aug. 23, to Tom and Karla Yoder Buller, Hesston, Kan.

Fish, Sadie Elizabeth, Aug. 24, to Brandon and Emily Nunemaker Fish, Burr Oak, Mich.

Friesen, Jace Bryant, July 16, to Gentry and Joy Busenitz Friesen, Aurora, Neb.

Gerber, Owen Shawn, Aug. 29, to Shawn and Rachel Springer Gerber, Denver, Co.

Haarer, Silas Leon, Aug. 17, to Daryl and Crystal Shank Haarer, Goshen, Ind.

Hargett, Isaac Alexander Clayton, Aug. 30, to Kirk and Rhonna Williams Hargett, Manhattan, Kan.

Lerwick, Isaiah Scott, Aug. 15, to Scott and Joy Miller Lerwick, Inola, Okla.

Lonergan, Jackson William Brant, Aug. 14, to Jared and Sandra Goertzen Lonergan, Peoria, Ill.

Mast, Bethany Grace, Aug. 28, to Mark and Dawn Culbertson Mast, Harrisonburg, Va.

Mast, Wyatt Alan, June 17, to Daryl and Karen Wenger Mast, Terre Hill, Pa.

McNeal, Addyson Noel, Aug. 24, to Jeffrey and Elizabeth Smith McNeal, Dayton, Va.

Minatelli, Elina Marie, Aug. 14, to Matt and Karen Longacher Minatelli, Alexandria, Va.

Mounsithiraj, Aaron Benjamin, July 28, to Viratham and Amy Birky Mounsithiraj, Goshen, Ind.

Paul, Mason Cole, Aug. 27, to Kenneth and Cinthia Moyer Paul, Souderton, Pa.

Reinford, Stephen Floyd, Aug. 24, to Randall and Joy Good Reinford, Sellersville, Pa.

Roth, Roman Ashton, Aug. 17, to Tracy and Holly Kaila Roth, Wayland, Iowa.

Simmons, Wyatt Allan, Aug. 8, to Joe and Heidi Summer Simmons, St. Louis, Mo.

Sprague, Kamryn Cierra, Aug. 14, to Nate and Vicki Mast Sprague, Elkhart, Ind.

Suter, Makayla Carmack, July 21, to James and Kimberly Ruhe Suter, Bluffton, Ohio.

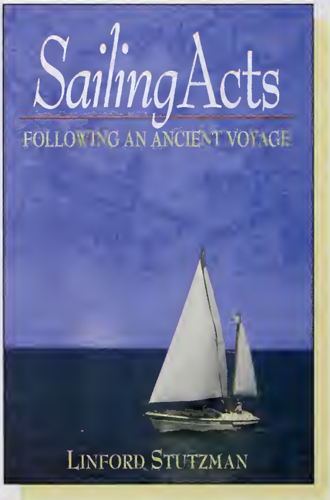
MARRIAGES

Abdul/Shilling: David Abdul, II, Hartville, Ohio, and Nicole Shilling, Massillon, Ohio, July 29 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Amunson/Meyer: Erik Amunson, Clarksville, Iowa, and Angela Meyer, Wayland, Iowa, July 22 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Brenneman/Kirkpatrick: Jennifer Brenneman, Denver, Co., and Timothy Kirkpatrick, Denver, July 22 at Catamount Ranch, Steamboat Springs, Co.

Bucklin/Gerber: Anna Nickel Bucklin, Mountain Lake, Minn., and Ryan Gerber, Beatrice, Neb., Aug. 5 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.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KAUFFMAN FAMILY TOUR to EUROPE (May 25 - June 8)
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Charles/Good: Derrick Charles, Lancaster, Pa., and Rebekah Good, Manheim, Pa., Aug. 5 at Bossler Mennonite Church, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Clarke/Longacre: Dustin Clarke, Quakertown, Pa., and Dawn Longacre, Quakertown, Aug. 18 at Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa.

Detweiler/Sherman: Dee Detweiler, Goshen, Ind., and Dale Sherman, Goshen, Aug. 19 at East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Doremus/Friesen: Nathan Doremus, Benedict, Neb., and Amy Friesen, Henderson, Neb., Aug. 12 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Friesen/Pilakowski: Patrick Friesen, Henderson, Neb., and Diana Pilakowski, Omaha, Neb., July 29 at St. James Catholic Church, Omaha.

Gessler/Naylor: Shelly Gessler, Madison, Wis., and Daniel Naylor, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 19 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Gingerich/Whittington: Ashlee Gingerich, Kalona, Iowa, and Derek Whittington, Hudsonville, Mich., Aug. 5 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Gruenhagen/Stuckey: Ashley Gruenhagen, Archbold, Ohio, and Anthony Stuckey, Archbold, July 29 at St. John Lutheran Church, Archbold.

Janzen/Taylor: Scott Janzen, Henderson, Neb., and Christa Taylor, Kidron, Ohio, July 22 in Sugarcreek, Ohio.

Knepp/Lynn: Tara Knepp, Wellman, Iowa, and Abe Lynn, Wabash, Ind., July 22 at Palisades Park, Linn County, Iowa.

Riegsecker/Yoder: Jill Riegsecker, Middlebury, Ind., and Michael Yoder, Shipshewana, Ind., Aug. 5 at the home of the bride's parents, Middlebury.

Risser/Tullis: Eric Riser, Middlebury, Ind., and Michelle Tullis, Middlebury, June 24 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Strauser/Zimmerman: Waneta Strauser, Mt. Union, Pa., and Harry Zimmerman, Downingtown, Pa., July 1 at CMA Church, Mt. Union, Pa.

Sweeney/Yoder: Carol Sweeney, Harrisonburg, Va., and Jon Yoder, Harrisonburg, June 3 at Camp Horizons, Harrisonburg.

DEATHS

Bontrager, Vivian Celia Blosser, 81, Wakarusa, Ind., died Aug. 24. Spouse: Albert Bontrager. Parents: Henry and Celia Bixler Blosser. Children: Philip, Duane, Kevin; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 26 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

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Brubacher, Lucille Moore, 85, North Newton, Kan., died Aug. 28. Spouse: Edward James Brubacher. Parents: John H. and Mary Jackson Moore. Children: Edward James, John Wade, Michael Jack; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 1 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Byerly, Douglas Craig, 64, Des Allemands, La., died Aug. 28 in his sleep. Spouse: Reba Veillon Byerly. Parents: Ronald and Margie Cutter Byerly. Stepmother: Ruth Byerly. Children: Billy, Douglas Eugene, Tammy Byerly, Lisa Tregle, Katina Cortez; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 31 at Des Allemands Mennonite.

Choma, Rosalia Mary Keehner, 73, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 11 of Alzheimer's. Spouse: Joseph Choma (deceased). Parents: Martin and Mary Particia Sturgeon Keehner. Children: Christine Choma Kennel, Gregory; four grandchildren. Funeral: Septe. 23 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana, Ohio.

Flickinger, Della Gretchen Krehbiel, 87, McPherson, Kan., died Aug. 19. Spouse: Herbert T. Flickinger (deceased). Parents: Valentine W. and Adina Zerger Krehbiel. Children: Bonnie Peterson, Max, Ronald; six grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 24 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson, Kan.

Fretz, John Lewis, 86, Salem, Ore., died Aug. 9. Spouse: Beulah Roth Fretz. Parents: Joseph and Martha Reeser Fretz. Children: John, Joseph, Roderick, Iona Ward, Karma Gingrich; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Salem Mennonite Church.

Friesen, Orlando J., 79, North Newton, Kan., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Barbara Miller Friesen. Parents: John and Katie Ensz Friesen. Children: Steven, Phillip, Kathryn Campbell; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 30 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Gehman, Sallie Kulp, 87, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 10. Spouse: Paul S. Gehman. Parents: Frank and Barbara Musselman Kulp. Children: Ivan, Ernest, Leora Gehman, Clara Seaman, Sallie Halteman, Karen Hessler; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 20 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Glick, Herman, 86, Atglen, Pa., died July 15 of lymphoma. Spouse: Mary Umble Glick. Parents: Reuben and Mary Engle Glick. Children: James, Ann Derrick, Virginia Graybill, Susan Ruth; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 19 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen.

Good, Jeffrey Allan, 50, Shipshewana, Ind., died Sept. 1 from injuries sustained in a car accident. Spouse: Sherry Kronk Good. Parents: Simon and Marjorie Mast Good. Children: Justin, Steffen, Tristan, Logan. Funeral: Sept. 5 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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Hess, Melvin Erb, 87, Lancaster, Pa., died July 16. Spouse: Evelyn Huber Hess. Parents: Jacob and Anna Erb Hess. Children: Kenneth, Melvin, Donald, Richard; 11 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 20 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Heyerly, Keith Eugene, 74, Canby, Ore., died Aug. 29. Spouse: Goldie Garber Heyerly. Parents: Jesse and Gladys Berkey Heyerly. Children: Leon, Gwen Peachey, Patricia Martens; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 2 at Zion Mennonite, Canby.

Kroeker, Goerge E., 93, Inman, Kan., died Sept. 4. Spouse: Justina T. Doerksen Kroeker (deceased). Parents: Klaas D. and Margaretha Esau Kroeker. Children: Velma Goertzen, Virgil, Menno Dean, Delbert; 13 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Matthews, Mary Miller, 82, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 5. Spouse: Peter Matthews (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Amanda Schmucker Miller. Funeral: Aug. 10 at Yoder Culp Funeral Home, Goshen.

Miller, Anna Leaman, 92, Leola, Pa., died Aug. 10. Spouse: J. Kendig Miller (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Mary Wenger Leaman. Child: J. Glen; one grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand, Pa.

Nice, Harold K., 75, Telford, Pa., died June 27. Spouse: Dorothy Bergey Nice. Parents: John M. and Katie Kerr Nice. Children: Robert, Betty Kulp, Donald, Dennis, John, Susan Blum; 16 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 1 at Franconia Mennonite Church.

Schrag, Mildred Ries, 89, Marion, S.D., died Aug. 26. Spouse: Ben J. Schrag (deceased). Parents: Henry J. and Amelia Kaufman Ries. Child: Candace Schrag; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: August 29 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Schreck, Raymond A., 57, New Paris, Ind., died Aug. 19. Spouse: Dorothy Crilow Schreck. Parents: Raymond and Marie Baer Schreck. Children: Kevin Schreck, Karen Martin, Brent Nunemaker, Travis Nunemaker, Carla Richer; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 24 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Smucker, John R., 74, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 1 at home. Spouse: Donna L. Gerber Smucker. Parents: J. Mervin and Icie Wenger Smucker. Children: Elizabeth Grieser, Emily Beidler, John, Stephen; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 5 at North Goshen Mennonite Church.

Umble, Jordan Matthew, 22, Seaside, Ore., died July 28 from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident. Parents: Kenneth and Marilyn Rheinheimer Umble. Funeral: Aug. 3 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Yost, Irene Kauffman, 95, Lititz, Pa., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Ray S. Yost (deceased). Parents: Jonathan and Anna Hertzler Kauffman. Children: Anne Kornmayer, Catherine Godshall, Leon, R. Arthur; eight grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 12 at Landis Homes, Lititz.

Zimmerly, Glenn E., 72, Wooster, Ohio, died Aug. 25. Spouse: Dorothy Williams Zimmerly. Parents: Aldine and Velma Steiner Zimmerly. Children: Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi, Miles Zimmerly Wierderkehr; five grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 28 at Orrville Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

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Thurston Woods Village, a not-for-profit retirement community, located in Sturgis, Mich., is in the search process for a ***irector of development***. This person's primary responsibilities will be to increase philanthropic support for Thurston Woods's operations, capital projects and special needs by inviting endowments, bequests and contributions from individuals, businesses, churches and foundations. Successful candidates will possess strong interpersonal skills, have a positive attitude toward the elderly, be outgoing and energetic, highly organized, an effective communicator, proficient in applicable computer technologies, assertive, flexible, team oriented and a self-starter. A relevant college degree is preferred. Please send cover letter and resumé to: Brenda Hubbard, Human Resource Director, Thurston Woods Village, 307 North Franks Avenue, Sturgis, MI 49091 or email bhubbard@thurstonwoods.org

Gift & Thrift Shops of Harrisonburg, Va., announces a full-time job opportunity. Booksavers will be hiring a ***full-time assistant manager***. People who are comfortable with a computer, have a broad knowledge of books, good organizational skills and a willingness to supervise volunteers should contact Glendon Blosser at 540-434-0657 or email Glendor@adelphia.net.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary invites pastors to register for a ***study group*** focusing on the writings of Paul, led by Jacob Elias, professor of New Testament. The group will meet twice at AMBS between January and June, and will interact via online discussion with each other and with AMBS students enrolled in a course on Romans. The goal is to study Paul's pastoral correspondence, discuss his theology and ethics and reflect on his counsel for ministry today. Reimbursement for travel expenses and a small stipend are available. Information and an application are online at www.ambs.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep_study_groups.php. Information is also available from the Church Leadership Center at 574-296-6269. Send applications by Sept. 30 to AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or email to easaner@ambs.edu.

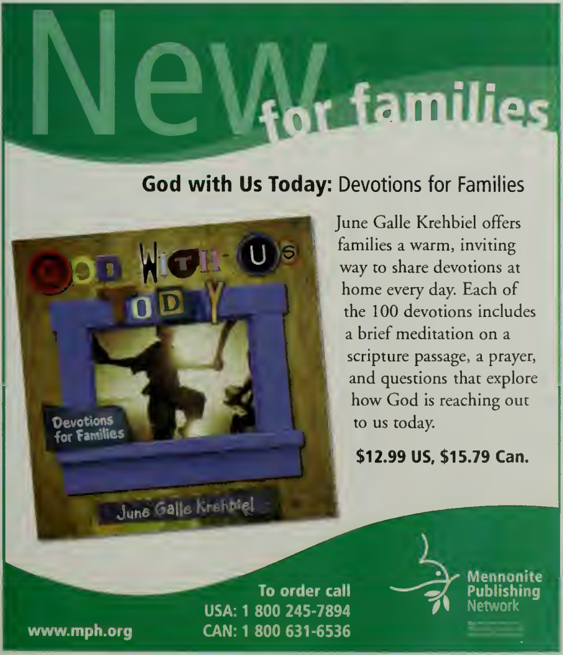
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary invites pastors to apply for ***funded sabbaticals*** for up to nine weeks on the AMBS campus. Funding covers housing, provides a stipend and allows pastors to participate in campus events, meet with professors and receive spiritual direction. Participants pursue a writing project of choice. Applications for spring 2007 are due on Oct. 2, 2006, and applications for fall 2007 are due on April 28, 2007. Openings are still available during both semesters. Information and application forms are available at www.ambs.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep_sabbatical.php, or call 574-296-6269 for information. Send applications to AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or easaner@ambs.edu.

Western Mennonite School seeks ***full-time public relations manager*** to lead communications, public relations and event-planning efforts. Other responsibilities include writing and providing marketing/communication support for fund-raising and admissions. Qualifications include bachelor's degree in related field and strong organizational, interpersonal and leadership skills. Contact Andrea Wall at dwall@westernmennoniteschool.org or 866-343-9378. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students locally and various states and countries. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

Goshen College Department of Sociology/Anthropology and Social Work seeks applicants for a ***tenure-track position in sociology***, an internationally focused major; Ph.D. in sociology required by fall 2007. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment. Closing date for applications is Oct. 20, 2007.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Kristene Miller, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.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Sharon Mennonite Church, a congregation of 260 in rural central Ohio near Columbus, invites applications for the position of ***full-time youth pastor***. Individual should have a zeal for Christ and passion for youth. Will give oversight primarily to the senior MYF and junior MYF, but also leadership to young adult ministries. Congregational information available upon request. Contact chair of search committee Glenn Hochstetler at 7675 Amity Pike, Plain City, OH 43064 or email sharonmenno@yahoo.com.

Associate pastor of youth and worship: **Oak Grove Mennonite Church**, a growing, vibrant church of approximately 275 attendees in rural West Liberty, Ohio, is seeking a full-time associate pastor. Primary responsibilities will be to pastor the youth and assist the congregation in providing creative and meaningful worship experiences. Please contact Search Committee Chairman Larry Steider at lsteider@earthlink.net or 937-465-3183.

Chief executive officer: **Landis Homes**, a Mennonite retirement community in Lititz, Pa., seeks a new chief executive officer. Preferred candidates will have strong financial acumen, board experience, a clear values-based leadership style and be an active member of a Mennonite church. Send inquiries to: Kirk Stiffney, MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite A, Goshen, IN 46526, fax 574-534-3254 or email kirkstiffney@msn.com.

Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions is seeking a person to serve as a ***full-time development director*** to provide leadership for the fund-raising efforts of the mission program and serve as an advocate for mission in Virginia Conference. Experience in finance, familiarity with the Mennonite Church and good relational skills are required. Position is available immediately. Contact Lois Maust at 540-434-9727. Please submit resumé and application by Sept. 29.

Goshen College is seeking a ***full-time director of public relations***. For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Development director needed for full-time Christian ministry at **Spruce Lake Retreat**, a multifaceted, dynamic camp/retreat ministry serving 25,000 people annually in the Pocono Mts. of northeastern Pennsylvania, closely affiliated with the Mennonite Church. This person creates numerous, efficient and compelling opportunities for ministry support and coordinates these into a comprehensive, integrated program. Currently the program includes a major capital campaign along with annual fund-raising events, pledge and planned giving programs. Ideal candidate is a passionate advocate of Christian camping, experienced in non-profit fund-raising or in sales/sales management in a customer-oriented environment, persistent, positive and connected with the Mennonite community in eastern Pennsylvania. Salary and liberal benefits package provided. On-camp housing may be available, or person may work from their eastern Pennsylvania home. Resumé: Mark Swartley, Executive Director, Spruce Lake Retreat, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505 x 118; fax 570-595-0328; email slrjobs@sprucelake.org.

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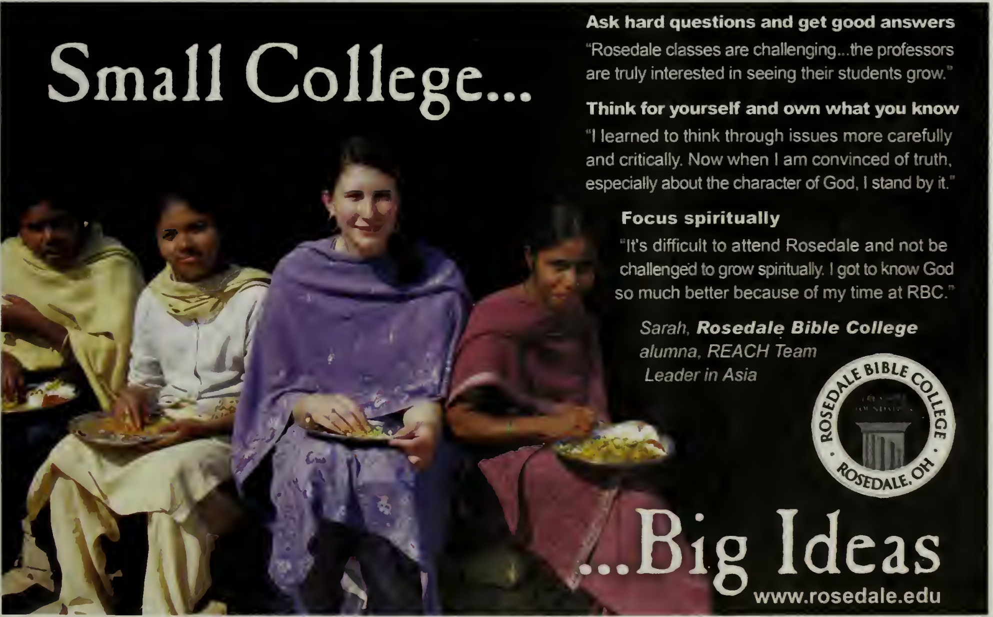

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The lure of conspiracism

Gordon Houser

Conspiracism has been around for ages and is as rampant as ever. Blaming some (or all) of the world's problems on some vast conspiracy is a product of paranoia and lazy thinking. It is also tempting because it simplifies the complexities of our problems and conveniently places the responsibility for them on others.

Since the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, conspiracy theories have abounded about who was responsible for that tragedy. If you search the phrase "9/11 conspiracy" on the Internet, you'll find nearly a million Web pages.

As of May, a Web-based film called *Loose Change* was at the top of Google video's Top 100, with more than 10 million viewings. This film, plus many books and hundreds of Internet sites, looks at the evidence around the collapse of the World Trade Center, the plane crash into the Pentagon and the crash of United Flight 93 in Pennsylvania and suggests that in some way the U.S. government was either behind the attacks or at least knew about them in advance.

This summer, a reputable Presbyterian publisher, Westminster John Knox Press, brought out the book *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11: A Call to Reflection and Action* ($17.95) by David Ray Griffin, professor emeritus of philosophy and theology at Claremont School of Theology.

Griffin argues that "members of the Bush administration and the U.S. military orchestrated the attacks of 9/11 … in order to advance their imperial aims." He calls on Christians to oppose these imperial aims and to expose the truth behind 9/11.

Meanwhile, *Popular Mechanics* has done its own investigation into the claims of the 9/11 conspiracy movement. In August came the book *Debunking 9/11 Myths: Why Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand Up to the Facts*, edited by David Dunbar and Brad Reagan (Hearst Books, $14.95).

This book examines every claim made by conspiracy theorists about 9/11 and presents "facts." Among other items, they look at the hijackers' flying skills, the melted steel in the World Trade Center, Flight 77 debris and the small hole in the Pentagon, the cell-phone calls and the wreckage from Flight 93 and present credible evidence that accords with the understanding that terrorists were behind the attacks.

In an afterword, James B. Meigs, editor-in-chief of *Popular Mechanics*, writes: "The American public has every right to demand answers and all too many reasons to lack confidence in the government. Sadly, in such a climate, the fantasies of 9/11 conspiracists provide a seductive alternative to facing the hard facts and difficult choices of our time."

Lawrence Wright, in his excellent new book, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (Knopf, $27.95), helps us understand what led up to the attacks.

With thorough documentation he tells a riveting narrative of the emergence of al-Qaeda under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden. He also covers the work of FBI agents who identified members of al-Qaeda behind the *USS Cole* bombing. He reports that the CIA knew but refused to tell the FBI that these members were in the United States one year before 9/11.

One can agree with Griffin that the United States has imperial aims and resembles an empire without agreeing that the U.S. government was behind the 9/11 attacks. Incompetence, ignorance and competition, not conspiracy, were the main factors in allowing the attacks to occur.

As we work for justice and truth, we should let clear thinking and faith, not fear, guide us.

FILMS

World Trade Center (PG-13) is based on the true story of two police officers who were buried under the rubble of the World Trade Center towers on Sept. 11, 2001. The film takes us into their lives and that of their families as they wait for news. With the trapped men we experience the claustrophobic approach of death and measure our own lives in terms of what is most important. For them, and for many that day, their love for their families was preeminent. Except for a couple of over-the-top, preachy moments, the film sticks with their story.

Little Miss Sunshine (R) is an unusual comedy with heart. A family of dysfunctional people gets into their VW bus and heads for California so that 7-year-old Olive can be in the Little Miss Sunshine contest. The story introduces situations, each just short of incredulity, filled with humor and pathos. As the others' dreams crumble, Olive is the innocent one who keeps the family together. The film satirizes the American ideal of success with hilarious sets. It communicates—without an ounce of preachiness—that family love and loyalty are more important than winning.

BOOKS

Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-Surrender, Love of God and Love of Neighbor by David Augsburger (Brazos Press, 2006, $19.99) joins Donald Kraybill's *The Upside-Down Kingdom* as one of the most important books on Anabaptist spirituality to come along. Augsburger organizes the book around seven practices that come out of the Anabaptist tradition: radical attachment, stubborn loyalty, tenacious serenity, habitual humility, resolute nonviolence, concrete service and authentic witness. He argues for a "tripolar spirituality" that sees love for God and neighbor as "interdependent and inseparable." He includes helpful stories showing these practices.

Religious Nuts, Political Fanatics: U2 in Theological Perspective by Robert Vagacs (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005, $15) delves into the lyrics of the popular Irish rock group to find theological insights and perspectives. He draws on Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann's idea of orientation-disorientation-reorientation in the Psalms and applies this to U2's body of songs. U2 fans will especially appreciate this book, though others may find surprising insights.

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Everett J. Thomas

Two days of peace

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.—Matthew 5:9

What would happen if we all tried to make peace for two specific days? On Sept. 21 and 24, we will have opportunities to try. Sept 21 has been set by the United Nations as International Day of Peace. In response, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) is asking all members of the global Anabaptist family to observe the first Sunday after Sept. 21, which falls on Sept. 24 this year, as Peace Sunday.

How would we make peace for these days? The United Nations resolution is specific: one day of global cease-fire and nonviolence with all nations and people honoring a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the day.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has also asked U.N. departments and agencies to expand their observance and hold to a Minute of Silence at noon on Sept. 21. We at The Mennonite plan to participate in this Minute of Silence that day, and we invite you to do so as well.

Some of us may also want to observe individual cease-fires during one or both days. A personal day of peace may mean a cessation of the hostilities we perpetuate with family members, colleagues, or sisters and brothers in the church. But peace is not simply a cease-fire and the temporary absence of conflict. Making peace requires energy, focus and action.

A sermon distributed with MWC's worship material for Peace Sunday on Sept. 24 lists some difficult but necessary personal peacemaking actions:

- Be reconciled with our sisters and brothers who have something against us, even with our accusers (Matthew 5:23-25).
- Let our word be yes or no (Matthew 5:37).
- [Do] not resist an evildoer (Matthew 5:39).
- Love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44).
- Give alms with humility (Matthew 6:3-4).
- Store for ourselves treasures in heaven rather than on earth (Matthew 6:19-20).
- Do not judge others (Matthew 7:1).

In a letter accompanying the material, Paulus S. Widjaja and Judy Zimmerman Herr, staff for MWC's Peace Council, expanded the suggestions from individual actions to things that families and congregations can do together:

- Ring the church bell at noon on Sept. 21 to celebrate International Day of Peace and observe the Minute of Silence.
- Plant peace trees in the church yard or at homes.
- Light a candle each day at dinner as a symbol of all family members to become peacemakers.
- Observe a peaceful lifestyle and reject any violent action in the month of September, be it physical (beating, slapping), verbal (cursing, disgracing) or psychological (threatening, intimidating).

Rejecting psychological forms of violence is the most difficult for me. When I am verbally attacked or maligned, the overwhelming urge is to respond with subtle threats and intimidation. It is tempting to misuse the power entrusted to me through several positions and roles I am privileged to have—including this role as a magazine editor. But both the Matthew 5 text (above) the Peace Sunday sermon reject such use of power.

"[Being a child of God], in the final analysis, is not determined by the might one has," says the sermon, "but by one's right attitude (orthopraxis). Faith is not related to physical or structural might but to the right way of life with God, the way of life that brings peace.

"Jesus' invitation, 'Follow me,' is not a mere invitation to become his disciples. This is an invitation to become the new people of God, who are called to carry out God's new law."

It makes sense that Mennonites, members of a peace church, would visibly support an International Day of Peace. As citizens of this world, we can pray that all nations will respond with goodwill to a call for a cease-fire for at least one day each year.

If we take actions that make peace—in our homes, relationships and congregations—then we may be called children of God for at least two days.—ejt

If we take actions that make peace, then we may be called children of God for at least two days.

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Accessibility

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

It is like a comic routine. First one phone rings, and I dive into my purse to see if the ring is coming from my personal cell phone, my church cell phone or maybe the church emergency cell phone that I carry when I am on call. I need all three phones for different reasons.

I carry a personal cell phone because it is my link to my daughter living in England. Due to the time difference, I can't call her when I come home in the evenings because she is already in bed, and I can't call her in the mornings before I leave because she is at her place of employment. When it suits her, she calls me, and I return the call.

I carry a church cell phone so people from the congregation can reach me without having to call long distance. And since the pastoral staff takes turns taking calls for emergencies, and the congregation is not always aware of which staff member is on, we carry an emergency phone when the church office is closed. If you call the church office, the voice will remind you of the telephone number for the emergency phone. Hence the three phones and the flinging of my purse's contents when trying to locate the phone that is ringing. The phones are especially amusing when I enter a hospital and have to turn off all three. That task alone cuts into my visiting time.

Then there is email. Years ago I could send out a letter and expect to have at least a week before a reply surfaced. Once email became de rigueur, the turnaround time became minutes and hours rather than days. The pace of work increased exponentially. Now I've learned that younger generations bypass email in favor of instant messaging.

Why do we need to be so accessible to each other? With all this accessibility it would be easy for me to feel overly important. I might think I must employ all these methods of communication so I can be available to others because they need me. I become a messiah figure or spiritual superhero ready at the drop of a hat to leap to someone's aid. And I am not alone. I've seen other church bulletins listing the pastor's home phone number, cell phone number and email address, just in case anyone needs immediate aid.

However, my reality has shown me that when I am completely accessible to others, I have less to give that is of true value. The truth of my calling does not require an emergency life-or-death action. I have no paddles that when zapped with spiritual juice will bring someone back to life. I can be with a person, but I cannot fix their pain and make it better. Just as the true pain of our lives is usually revealed slowly, so are the answers and the comfort we seek. That requires an encounter with God. I can only remind someone of God's presence; communion with God has to be their own.

Why all this communication noise in my life? Why all the fire of keyboard typing and the wind of voices talking on phones? Why the earthquake of three phones vibrating in my purse? At times I want to wrap my mantle around my face like Elijah and disappear. He ran from all the people in his life who wanted him. He had run from Ahab and Jezebel and the prophets of Baal to escape the noise (1 Kings 19:11-13). Then he discovered God in the sound of sheer silence.

I fear that our accessibility to others due to email, instant messaging, cell phones and text messages compromises our ability to hear the sheer silence in our lives. Not only does it distract us from God, but we distract others by demanding interaction with them. I question the cost of all these methods of instant communication. Do they serve us, or are we serving them? Remember communion with God is ours to make alone.

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 19, October 3, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Web site: www.TheMennonite.org

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

1251 Virginia Ave.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
phone: 540-434-2556
fax: 540-434-5556

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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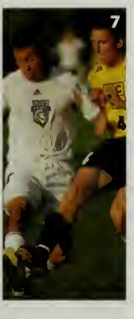

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

No need for Gandhi

I noted the article "Remembering the Nonviolent 9/11" (Sept. 5) with some sadness. While his life and accomplishments are certainly to be respected, I find it difficult to understand the necessity or expediency of looking to Mohandas K. Gandhi as an example for a Christian lifestyle of nonviolence. A basic reason comes to mind: Gandhi did not claim to be a believer, surrendered to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Let us look to the full scope of the Incarnation as our foundation. In addition, there are numerous examples for our learning among the faithful saints and martyrs of 2,000 years of church history. These heroes of the faith, as they sought to emulate the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, provide us with such a challenging witness that we need look no further. I encourage publication of some of their stories.—*Eugene R Thieszen, Cordell, Okla.*

No reason to fear

Duane Beachey's "How Can Mennonites Support War?" (Speaking Out, Sept. 5) is astute and to the point. It is full of insights on how we got to this point of being peacemakers yet supporting whatever war the country is waging. He shows us why there is a serious disconnect between our faith and our action.

This situation is not new. It was also true for my home congregation in the 1940s. Nearly 70 percent of our young men were being drafted into the military until we again had pastoral leadership that made it clear our priorities were different from those of the government. Even though our congregation was seen by many as a "peace church," our behavior was not consistent with our expressed beliefs. Fortunately there was a great turnaround within a few months of Bible study.

Who of us can imagine killing our neighbors or burning their children? How can we as followers of Jesus condone "the hideous banquet of war"? Beachey reminds us that we do not kill or believe in the myth of redemptive violence. War is the ultimate act of terrorism. Let us not be intimidated by the powers that be. Instead let us take steps of faithful obedience on the way of peace. By God's grace we have no reason to fear.—*Donald D. Kaufman, Newton, Kan.*

U.S. not leaving Iraq

With the fifth anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001, it is increasingly clear that many in the Mennonite church and many key politicians and news media have no idea about the real motivations that have led us into the Iraq War and the war on terror. If you have not heard of the "Project for the New American Century," you may not really grasp why the United States went into Iraq and why we will never leave. This is a group of Ronald Reagan admirers who, long before Bush was elected president, were planning that if they ever returned to power they would establish American global dominance similar to the Roman Empire, calling it "Pax Americana."

By reading between the lines on their Web site (www.newamericancentury.org), it becomes clear that the reason we are in Iraq has nothing to do with 9/11 or weapons of mass destruction, and not much to do with "Saddam Hussein's horrific crimes against his own people." But it has everything to do with establishing a permanent American presence in the Middle East. It is difficult to recognize any exit strategy to the Iraq War because there is none. Why would we plan on leaving if we're building a $1 billion embassy—the largest in the world—as well as 14 military bases in Iraq?

Of course we're not leaving. It's hard to pray for peace in a world that doesn't want peace, but we must.—*Brian D. Stucky, Goessel, Kan.*

Responses to Aug. 15 issue

Re the Aug. 15 issue that, as usual, included interesting and inspiring articles and reports: First, the editorial was a bit harsh. I have been favorably impressed with the way our agencies give us open and honest financial reports in a timely fashion. If more information is desired than is in a published

IN THIS ISSUE

There is something for just about everyone in this issue. Are you concerned about the way cell phones and emails are changing our culture? Read why Anne Stuckey carries three cell phones (page 2). Do you believe it is wrong to spank your child in anger? See Valerie Weaver-Zercher's admission that she is "one mean Mennonite mama" (page 11). Do you feel like you are out of step with the world because you want peace instead of war? Read how Arthur Paul Boers lost a fight with God three decades ago (page 8). Berry Friesen speaks out about "the popularity of Left Behind eschatology and our lack of preparation to articulate an alternative" (page 18). There are interesting facts in the section that lists births, marriages and deaths, including notes from one couple that had a baby on July 31, then adopted a toddler on Sept. 8 (page 24). Finally, assistant editor Anna Groff files her news story from Mennonite Church USA Executive Board's meeting in San José, Calif., Sept 21-23. In that meeting, the board approved a plan by Mennonite Mission Network to build and endow a new office building in Elkhart, Ind.—*Editor* report, this is available by a personal contact with the agency. Second, J. Daniel Hess did an excellent job of profiling three families in "Stories of Giving." If we are to compare our giving with their dedication, it may have been helpful to include a brief summary of their income levels. It behooves each of us to compare our federal income tax return (a reflection of our personal budget) to the budgets of our congregation and conference and church agencies and institutions so as to reach a level of "enlightened" giving.—*Daniel J. Graber, Goshen, Ind.*

Don't dismiss all conspiracy theories

Gordon Houser's Mediaculture column ("The Lure of Conspiracism," Sept. 19) is right to point out that "conspiracy theories" can provide easy and potentially misleading answers to people who wonder why the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, happened (some theories conflict with other conspiracy theories). As is true with many things we encounter in the world, Christians would do well to hold these ideas at arm's length and not be drawn into attitudes of fear and suspicion of anything and everyone.

But Houser goes too far in dismissing the concept of "conspiracy" as a whole. Numerous government conspiracies in the United States and world history are well documented and generally accepted as fact and not theory.

The Reagan and Bush Sr. administrations had the Iran-Contra scandal and the Savings and Loan scandal. The "October Surprise" of 1979 was at one time dismissed as fantasy but has been verified by numerous reputable sources (Barbara Honegger, a former Reagan campaign aide, being one). "Iraq-gate" and the "Bank of Credit and Commerce International" could also be named. These were all scandals, plots, hidden agendas; we could rightly call them conspiracy "facts."

The plot to arrest and kill Jesus was a true conspiracy that Jesus predicted, not out of paranoia but out of knowledge of the truth. The plot to claim that the disciples stole Jesus' body from the tomb was in fact a false conspiracy meant to mislead and undermine the truth. We should remember Christ's exhortation to "be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Both halves of this teaching are needed so Christians can avoid both blanket conspiracy theories, but also misplaced trust in the deceptive powers in this world.—*LeVon Smoker, Harrisonburg, Va.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

The troubles in our world since Sept. 11, 2001, have caused me to rely more on God for personal peace and a sense of security (49 votes):

○ Yes (57%)

○ No (27%)

○ Not sure (16%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

RESOURCES

Becoming Who You Are: Insights on the True Self from Thomas Merton and Other Saints by James Martin (Paulist Press, 2006, $8.95) uses personal examples as well as the lives of Merton, Henri Nouwen and others to explore how becoming who you are—the person God created—is a simple path to happiness, peace of mind and even sanctity.

A Deep and Subtle Joy: Life at Quarr Abbey by Luke Bell (Paulist Press, 2006, $15.95) takes the reader on a 24-hour tour of the Benedictine Monastery founded on the Isle of Wight and provides an introduction to Christian spirituality. He draws lessons from such questions as, What can we learn from the way pigs eat? or, Why is the cloister hidden?

All God's Creatures: The Blessing of Animal Companions by Debra K. Farrington (Paraclete Press, 2006, $14.95) explains that connections with pets are part of the fabric of life and that from the beginning of time God intended humans and animals to live in covenant together.

A Catalogue of Angels: The Heavenly, the Fallen and the Holy Ones Among Us by Vinita Hampton Wright (Paraclete Press, 2006, $16.95) explores the origin and nature of angels, where they dwell, what they do and how they relate to humanity.

Mind the Light: Learning to See with Spiritual Eyes by J. Brent Bill (Paraclete Press, 2006, $14.95) invites readers to "mind the light," the Quaker practice of learning to see God's light within and also in the world. To see with spiritual eyes is to be illuminated to grow in appreciation of God's presence in all things.

Accompanied by Angels: Poems of the Incarnation by Luci Shaw (Eerdmans, 2006, $15) gathers annual poems Shaw has sent to her friends and family. These form a poetic journey through the birth, life and death of Jesus the Christ, culminating in the wonder of his resurrection.

Abraham's Bind and Other Bible Tales of Trickery, Folly, Mercy and Love by Michael J. Caduto (SkyLight Paths, 2006, $19.99) is a collection of reimagined Bible stories that reaches across generations of human striving to connect with the oneness of all.

Countryside Cooking and Chatting: Traditional Recipes and Wisdom from the Amish and Mennonites by Lucy Leid (Herald Press, 2006, $15.99) brings nearly 400 traditional recipes from Old Order Amish and Mennonite kitchens across the United States and Canada—along with some charming folk wisdom. Recipes include Honey Oatmeal Bread, Little Spatzlein, Sausage Zucchini Bake, Bread and Butter Pickles, Chocolate Whoopi Pies and Kitchen-Made Apple Butter.

Pastor Driven Stewardship: 10 Steps to Lead Your Church to Biblical Giving by Rod Rogers (Brown Books Publishing Group, 2006, $19.95) presents a 10-step system that has been used effectively by more than 900 churches in 13 countries.

The Power of Principles: Ethics for the New Corporate Culture by William J. Byron (Orbis Books, 2006, $16) uses concrete examples to present 10 ethical principles for corporate culture, including integrity, truthfulness, fairness, human dignity, participation, social responsibility and love.

Meeting Our Multifaith Neighbors by Brice H. Balmer (Herald Press, 2006, $14.99) addresses key issues for North American Christians who want to be respectful of other religions and share their faith.

IN BRIEF

MMA presidential search progresses

The MMA presidential succession committee reports its search for candidates went well this past summer, and it's moving into the interviewing stage. "We are pleased and enthused with the strong leadership qualifications in our candidates," says Pat Swartzendruber, chair of the succession committee. "As a result, we are concluding resumé reviews and beginning the interview process with a selected number of candidates." The MMA Board of Directors is expected to be involved in interviewing at its Oct. 20-21 meeting.—*MMA*

CPS reunion held in Virginia

At the 2006 Civilian Public Service reunion, held Aug. 17 at Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., 95 men and women reflected on their experiences during World War II. Because their ages now range from 78 to 91, they asked CrossRoads (the Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center) to plan and host the event. Ted Grimsrud helped the group reflect on "Why CPS is important." Many of the participants had served as health-care technicians, milk testers, smoke jumpers and road builders and laborers in the national park system.—*J. Allen Brubaker*

Lederach receives peace award in Nicaragua

NOTRE DAME, Ind.—John Paul Lederach, professor of international peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame, has been honored with the Order of the Culture of Peace for his work in Nicaragua and around the world.

John Paul Lederach

The annual award was presented Sept. 7 at the Polytechnical University of Nicaragua (UPOLI). It is sponsored by the university's Martin Luther King Institute in collaboration with the World Council of Churches peace program.

Emerson Perez Sandoval, UPOLI president, praised Lederach's effort to build a culture of peace around the world through peace education and the direct transformation of conflicts.

The official act bestowing Lederach's award acknowledged his Mennonite faith and noted that his contributions "distinguish him as an ethical model, a person who coherently has integrated belief and action, theory and practice, word and life testimony."

Lederach formerly taught at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.—*MDS*

Newton bookstore bought by local group

NEWTON, Kan.—On Sept. 15, the Provident Bookstore in Newton was sold by Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) to a local investor group. The store was to be closed for two weeks for renovations. A grand reopening was scheduled for early October.

In consultations with church and business leaders last December and February, MPN executive director Ron Rempel discussed plans to either close or sell the Newton store, which has required subsidization over the past five years.

He also said that MPN, as the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, wants to focus on its core mission of publishing books and resources with an Anabaptist perspective. MPN publications, except for dated curriculum and periodicals, will continue to be available through the store.

In the consultations, Newton leaders indicated that the closure of the store would be a loss to the community. They formed a steering committee co-chaired by Dewayne Pauls and Virgil Penner, representing the community and the Newton Area Chamber of Commerce, and Ted Stuckey, representing Mennonite Church USA, to explore options and vision for local ownership. An investor group chaired by Lois J. Friesen purchased the store inventory and other assets.

Rachel Friesen will provide management oversight for the store, which will be renamed Faith and Life Bookstore, LLC. Rachel commented "that as we learn from each customer, this store will grow and change. We want the store to more clearly reflect and represent their interest and concerns."—*Mennonite Church USA*

Courtesy photo

Local help

Youth from Salem Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio, help with an affordable housing group's house in Orrville, Ohio.—*Aaron Hershberger*

Reuben Savanick scholarship awarded

GOSHEN, Ind.—Two Goshen (Ind.) College students, Mercy Oyana, Philadelphia, and Phillip Gehman, Leola, Pa., are the first recipients of the Rueben Savanick Memorial Scholarship. Oyana attends West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship and is a sophomore majoring in the American Sign Language-English Interpreter Preparation Program. Gehman attends Witmer Heights and First Deaf Mennonite Church and is a freshman whose career goal includes ministry with deaf youth and/or deaf church planting.

This scholarship, established by the Savanick family and managed by the Anabaptist Deaf Ministries (ABDM) board, honors Reuben Savanick of Scottdale, Pa., a Goshen alumnus and child of deaf parents. He was active in Mennonite Church Deaf Ministries and worked for many years at Mennonite Publishing House.

The scholarship, awarded to Goshen College or Associated Mennonite Seminary students, was designed to foster and encourage students studying American Sign Language to pursue careers in

Wayne Gehman

ı-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-l-l-l-l-l-l-l-l
di Bautista (#7) of Eastern Mennonite University and Adam
ler (#4) of Goshen (Ind.) College vie for the ball at EMU's
vly replaced artificial turf field Sept. 16 in Harrisonburg, Va.
EMU men's soccer team withstood a late scoring opportu-
by Goshen to close out a 1-0 victory over the Maple Leafs
ront of an estimated 1,600 fans.—*EMU*

ministry or other fields related to the deaf community—*Anabaptist Deaf Ministries*

President Bush signs MMA-initiated bill

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Retirement Trust, a retirement plan for Mennonite Church USA and related Anabaptist groups, has retained the right to continue paying benefits to retired participants. On Aug. 17, during a ceremony in Washington, President Bush signed into law the Pension Protection Act (H.R. 4), an act that includes the provisions of H.R. 5424, a bill MMA (MRT's plan administrator) took initiative in creating.

Had the bill not been passed, MRT members who desired a life annuity income option upon retirement would have been required to transfer their funds out of the pension plan. "It would have cost more money and provided less value for them (MRT participants)," said Karl Sommers, MMA's vice president of corporate planning, who worked with congressional members on the legislation.

From a technical point of view, the passing of H.R. 5424 allows MRT to continue providing annuity payments directly to participants as lifetime income once they retire. MMA initiated the bill in order to retain the same rights as other denominational church retirement plans. The new legislation is effective immediately.—*MMA*

Der Bote to end its ministry in June 2008

WINNIPEG—As one of only three remaining German language Mennonite periodicals in North America, *Der Bote* will celebrate 84 years of publication—and wind down its ministry—in June 2008.

The number of subscribers has decreased steadily, and though the paper has enjoyed strong financial support from readers, its operation has been subsidized increasingly through a special reserve fund. In the mid-1970s *Der Bote* enjoyed a high of more than 9,000 subscribers. Today there are 2,350 subscribers.

In April, the Der Bote Editorial Committee, along with editor Ingrid Janzen Lamp and Dave Bergen, Mennonite Church Canada's executive secretary for Christian Formation, decided to bring publication to a close.

Founded in 1924 as *Der Mennonitische Immigrantenbote* in Rosthern, Sask., it later merged with the U.S.-based *Christlicher Bundesbote* in 1947 and became the weekly paper for the former General Conference Mennonite Church as *Der Bote*. Since 2000, it has been a resource ministry of Mennonite Church Canada. The biweekly paper has provided news and spiritual nurture to readers in Canada, the United States, Mexico, South America and Europe.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

Hesston student cuts his long hair for a good cause
Hesston (Kan.) College sophomore Jon Huber, South Hutchinson, Kan., mailed 12 inches of his hair to Locks of Love, Lake Worth, Fla., Sept. 13. Marilyn Wilder, wife of campus pastor Kevin Wilder, cut his hair Aug. 13. His hair hadn't been cut since December 2004.—*Hesston College*

IN BRIEF

Going green

The trend toward more "green" building is catching on in mainstream construction and is reaching critical mass, according to industry experts." An estimated two-thirds of U.S. builders will be "building green" by next year, using nontoxic paint, wheatboard cabinetry, low-flow plumbing, high-efficiency heating and cooling and solar energy. Green technologies and materials reportedly boost costs by only 1 or 2 percent, which is quickly recaptured by energy savings. Companies who have invested in green buildings have found an added benefit—the healthier environment (less mold and chemicals) increases productivity as fewer employees miss work because of allergies and asthma.—*The Marketplace*

Safe at home

The brochure "Home Shouldn't be a Place that Hurts" offers guidelines on what to do if you are being abused, if you are abusive, if you know of abuse or if you are a church leader. It defines abuse as one person hurting, degrading or controlling another and lists signs of healthy relationships and abusive relationships. Statistics show that a quarter to a third of all U.S. marriages include some sort of violence. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The brochure is available free (plus shipping) in English or Spanish from mccstore.org.—*MCC*

Dwelling among those who hate peace

by Arthur Paul Boers

The most difficult aspect of being a Mennonite—then and now—is the peace position.

I lost a fight with God three decades ago, and being a good sport about it, I relented and became a Mennonite. I am still convinced this conversion was what God wanted. Yet I sometimes wish to point out to God a couple of matters that got short shrift in that long-ago debate. I hate not having the last word. I obeyed and respect this call with its many, many joys. Still, I would like to remind God that I suspected way back then that this decision might cost me a lot. And it has.

If heresy and blasphemy are publicly proclaimed, we must renounce it.

by Arthur Paul Boers

The most difficult aspect of being a Mennonite—then and now—is the peace position. It took a lot of study, Bible reading, prayer, discernment, conversation and debate before I was ready to accept this set of convictions. I resisted notions of nonresistance because, for one thing, they did not make common sense. I was not eager to learn forgiveness, loving and praying for my enemies, and radically entrusting myself to God's providence.

I correctly anticipated that this would mean being out of step with the wider world. So be it. As Flannery O'Connor once warned, "The truth shall make you odd." I was reminded of this not long ago by an ad campaign in our newspaper. I've subscribed for a few years, and there is much that I appreciate about the periodical, even though I often disagree with it. The splashy ads in this paper and on its Web site have patriotic photos of a row of noble and dignified military personnel standing at attention in full dress uniform. The campaign is called "Salute our heroes" and speaks glowingly of those in the U.S. armed forces. I was struck once again that being Mennonite means not being "normal." I respect the bravery, sacrifice and commitment of serving one's country in this way but can never "salute our heroes." I conscientiously object: "Too long have I had my dwelling among those who hate peace" (Psalm 120:6).

Decisive break from family: This saddens me in all kinds of ways. Most difficult is the reminder that embracing the peace position meant a decisive break from my family. They found nonresistance the most offensive aspect of my being Mennonite. They eventually came to terms with my electing to be baptized as an adult, even though they'd baptized me as a baby. But my father went to his grave unreconciled to my Anabaptist views about reconciliation.

There were reasons for his resentment. For one, he was a veteran. As a young man he overcame serious physical liabilities to volunteer in the Dutch army in a bitter war that haunted him all his life, with the nicotine addiction he acquired there, nightmares that plagued him for decades, and traumatic memories that he never discussed with anyone.

My family had other reasons for resenting the peace position. It was that kind of naiveté, they believe, that helped Hitler's Nazis conquer and occupy their homeland, the Netherlands. My father and both my grandfathers were active in the Resistance. And my great-grandmother died as a result of a Nazi-enforced evacuation. My family history means that we are suspicious of government potential for evil. To them conscientious objection can easily mean collaborating with oppression, wrong and injustice.

This brings me to the second matter that still needs addressing in my contested conversion to being Mennonite. I obeyed God's call and do not regret that. I am glad for God to have the last word in this and indeed all matters. But if I'd known about Mennonites back then what I know now, God would have had a much harder time persuading me to take the baptismal plunge.

If I'd known about Mennonites back then what I know now, God would have had a much harder time persuading me to take the baptismal plunge.

No one told me of the Mennonite World War II record. Yes, I heard about conscientious objectors. But I was never informed that many Prussian Mennonites approved of the Nazis, not just saluting and supporting its heroes but many even joining its forces. Mennonites in Ukraine welcomed Nazis as liberators from the hated Soviet regime. In the Netherlands, one of the most famous collaborating war criminals was Mennonite. This was not just in Europe. When I was a pastor, a senior and beloved member told me that as a young man he agreed with many other Canadian Mennonites who early on regarded Hitler's movement as blessedly advancing German culture.

When God wooed me into being Mennonite, my idealism was a motivation. I do not know what I would have done had I known these historical facts about the Mennonite record. I am tempted to complain with Jeremiah: "O Lord, you deceived me, and I was deceived" (Jeremiah 20:7a, NIV).

Perhaps I was too young to handle that knowledge. I am no longer as shocked. I now also know that in the last 30 years, often up to half of U.S. Mennonites supported their country's wars, whether World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq I or now Iraq II. A horrifyingly scandalous aspect of this latest war is how Christian faith, language and doctrine has been usurped, distorted and betrayed. I am so offended by one major Christian magazine's unquestionable cheering on of U.S. warmaking that I cancelled my subscription. I read this periodical since long before I was a Mennonite; I read it no more.

Theological and missional integrity: What particularly startles and unsettles me is how happy and jubilant U.S. Christians—even Mennonites—are that the current administration prides itself on using Christian language. This is an issue of theo-

Continued on page 10

I am brokenhearted that there is little careful deliberation, discernment or debate about the theological claims of George W. Bush.

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logical and missional integrity. I spent a month in Spain last year and had long conversations with non-Christians from all over the world. When they asked about what Mennonites believe, and I explained the peace position, each was startled, even shocked. They all gave the same reason for perplexity: "George Bush." In other words, he is the face of Christianity. Do we want to settle for this?

What are we to make of a country that dares to call one of its war campaigns "Operation Infinite Justice"? Do we trust history's strongest military to exercise justice? What do we do with continuing reports of civilian deaths, wrongful arrests, torture and war crimes? What does the Bible say about countries or armies or political leaders who claim to be infinite and ultimate?

Since Mennonites were deceived by blasphemous, even wicked, governments before, we need to weigh carefully all theological claims that politicians make. As George W. Bush explicitly uses theology, we need to study his words.

In 2001, after Sept. 11, he said to the wider world: "You're either with us or against us." Was he deliberately echoing Jesus? Are we comfortable with the claim that the United States has parity with Christ's status? Does this mean that Abu Ghraib, Haditha and Guantanamo are justifiable and we must not question or criticize them?

'The hope of mankind': On the first anniversary of Sept. 11, Bush gave an address in front of the Statue of Liberty. He proclaimed that the "ideal of America is the hope of all mankind." I know a lot of non-Americans—and many Americans too, come to think of it—who would argue with this. More to the theological point, only Jesus the Christ, our Lord and Savior, is, was and forever will be the hope of all humanity.

George W. Bush appears to suggest that the United States embodies Christ himself. In that same speech, before the statue's flame, he said: "That hope still lights our way. And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it." That distortion of a precious Scripture verse feels heart-stoppingly arrogant.

These are not accidental remarks but came on carefully crafted occasions. In the 2003 State of the Union, President Bush said: "There is power—wonder-working power—in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people." Many Christians were jubilant that Bush had the courage to use such vocabulary. But I heard few raise questions, let alone criticisms. This time at least he did not exploit Scriptures, only rewrote a beloved hymn. Still, I wonder whether "the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people" is an appropriate substitute for "the precious blood of the Lamb." This strikes me as a new interpretation of Christian theology. No longer do we rely on Christ's sacrifice, God's atoning work, but instead count on American bloodletting.

I raise these questions not as a partisan. I am not a Democrat, have never voted Democrat and am not sure I would vote Democrat even if I were a U.S. citizen. I am an alien here.

Rather I offer these concerns as an orthodox Christian, committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ our Savior and to his reign. I honor and uphold Christian creeds and confessions. And I am brokenhearted that there is little careful deliberation, discernment or debate about the theological claims of George W. Bush.

Blasphemous and heretical: In my view, such words were not just arrogant but—worse than that—blasphemous and even heretical. As Bush names himself a Christian, we have the right and duty to call him to account. Since he tells us of his fondness for Jesus as his favorite philosopher and that his warmaking decisions are rooted in prayer, all Christians need to test his assertions.

As one lonely and lowly Christian, I have neither the authority nor the desire to decide or finally judge Bush's actions and words. But it is the right and duty of the church to test and sift actions and claims made in Jesus' name. And if heresy and blasphemy are publicly proclaimed, we must renounce it. I am glad that I did not know 30 years ago about the failures of Mennonites to discern and confront government evil. But I hope that pattern does not continue.

When I became a Mennonite and embraced nonviolence, I thought I was brave. But now I want to ask God whether I was only foolhardy. I pray that we will be discerning and forthright in how we respond to the most explicitly "Christian" administration in U.S. history.

Arthur Paul Boers teaches pastoral theology and spiritual formation at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and is a member of Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

One *mean* Mennonite mama

A pacifist parent faces her anger.

by Valerie Weaver-Zercher

I did something not long ago that I've always claimed I'd never do: I spanked my child. Not only did I spank him, but I did it in a moment of complete, unfettered rage. Even if you think spanking is effective discipline, everyone knows you're not supposed to do it out of anger.

My 5-year-old was disappointed that he couldn't go to a picnic and was slamming doors, kicking and yelling, "Bad Mama!" (Considering what happened next, this was probably a fitting moniker.) The 3-year-old and 1-year-old were also throwing minor fits, and I was facing several more hours with these tykes. I was depleted, and after almost six years of parenting, I should have been able to read the handwriting on the wall: You are tired. You are angry. You will hurt your child if you do not shut yourself in the bathroom and repeat the Christ Prayer 20 times while breathing deeply.

But I couldn't read the warning signs because my vision was blurred with fury—or maybe I chose not to read the signs, because rage has such a strangely delicious taste. So instead of walking away or praying or calling a friend, I grabbed my eldest with my left hand and delivered several robust whacks to his bottom with my right.

Fortunately my arms are puny, and fortunately I woke up from my fuming stupor after about five whacks. I held him close and apologized profusely, and somehow we both straightened up enough to make it through the evening with a semblance of normalcy.

Let me be clear: I know better. I've taken conflict transformation classes, and I've led trainings on anger management. Yet I have talked to enough other parents to know that I'm not the only one who should know better—and doesn't. Several friends admit to grabbing their children's arms, hard, and one friend slapped her son for repeatedly dropping a book out of a wagon.

So what can we do once we've faced the truth that we're not the peaceable parents we'd like to be? I want to explore how we can forgive ourselves, how we can listen to our anger, how we can counteract our own fury with loving household rituals and how we can even transform our rage into a deeper, holier outrage at things that deserve our anger more than our children.

1. Find forgiveness. Receiving forgiveness from a 5-year-old is the easy part; forgiving myself is more difficult. Realizing that I can become furious enough to want to hurt a child is humiliating and terrifying. Before having children I didn't understand, at least in any visceral way, the importance of confession. Now I find it a formative act, and one I need to perform every day.

I must also learn to distinguish between anger and action. In those fragile, shame-filled moments after wanting to hurt a child, I am tempted to consider my rage a sin. Later, however, as I unfurl the strands of emotion and incident that led to my outburst, I remember that conceptualizing anger as a sin is riskier than seeing it as a signal that something needs to be changed. "I wonder if controlling my anger also makes me angry," writes Garret Keizer in *The Enigma of Anger: Essays on a Sometimes Deadly Sin*. "Trying to see everyone's point of view, trying to be patient beyond reason, trying to remember that the other person is also a child of God ... how far do you go with all this before you explode from accumulated grievance?"

So while I seek forgiveness for my violence, I do not seek it for my anger. Instead I want to see my fury as a signal, a flare on the horizon that I'd do best not to ignore.

2. Learn to decipher my own code of anger. Losing my temper takes me completely off-guard. But as Anne Lamott writes in her essay "Mother Anger: Theory and Practice": "When we blow up at our kids, we only think we're going from zero to 60 in one second. Our surface and persona are so calm that when the problem first begins, we sound in control when we say, 'Now, honey, stop that,' or 'that's enough.' But it's only an illusion," she writes. "Because actually we've been storing up grievances all day—against husbands and bosses and mothers and neighbors—and not been aware of them. So when the problem with your kid starts up, you're actually starting at 59, only you're not moving. You're in high idle already, but you are not even aware of how vulnerable and disrespected you already feel."

Reading my own anger also means developing

I should have been able to read the handwriting on the wall: You are tired. You are angry. You will hurt your child if you do not shut yourself in the bathroom and repeat the Christ Prayer 20 times while breathing deeply.

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Perhaps my anger at
the small particulars
of household life with children—
tantrums, clutter and whining—
can be transfigured
into holy outrage
at the things that enrage God.

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rituals of release that allow me to vent in a way that doesn't hurt myself or my children. Maybe I should take my own advice to my kids and go punch a pillow. I've been known to yell at the couch, and my sister-in-law admits to emitting a foghorn-like cry before yelling, "Uh, oh, Mama's gonna blow!" It's amazing how thin the line is between rage and humor and how healing the crossing of it can be.

3. Sanctify my house as often as I rage within it. When my family sits down for dinner, we light four candles before we pray: one for God the Creator, one for God who came in Jesus, one for God who comforts us through the Holy Spirit and one for someone we want to pray for that evening. At bedtime we read, pray and sing hymns. These small acts work as flags of sorts, ways to stake my family's loyalty to God's reign of peace and love rather than to the government of our fickle emotions.

While wallowing in parental shame, I underestimate the power of rituals like these. Such traditions function as antidotes to the angry episodes that all households experience. "The sanctification of our households through prayer, custom and ceremonies of tenderness works to curb anger," writes Keizer. At the most basic level, sacramental acts give our children memories of us when we're not seething ogres. They remind us of our own commitments to peaceful living, which run stronger and deeper than a day of shouting and spanking here and there. Such traditions also help us reground ourselves in our love for our children: it's harder to scream at someone when you remember you have to sing and pray with them in a couple hours.

4. Follow the path of my household frustrations toward holier anger. The irony of parental anger is that in a world where there is much to be angry about—injustice, war, racism, sexism—I express my anger most strongly at those who deserve it least: children. How is it that I rage more often at three little preschoolers than at the sin and inequity that deprive millions of food and water and education? How can I fume more often at the insolence of a 5-year-old than I do at the disrespect humans show to God through our disregard for creation?

Perhaps I can learn to shift the target of my anger from my children to these larger issues of injustice and inequity. Sue Monk Kidd speaks of transfiguring anger from rage to outrage. "Rage, or what might be called untransfigured anger, can become a calcified bitterness," Monk Kidd writes in *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*. "What rage wants and needs is to move outward toward positive social purpose. ... Outrage is love's wild and unacknowledged sister."

Holy outrage is what motivated Christ to overturn the moneychangers tables in the temple. Perhaps my anger at the small particulars of household life with children—tantrums, clutter and whining—can be transfigured into holy outrage at the things that enrage God.

It is important to discern when one's anger can be dealt with through a few commitments like these and when one's rage is truly injuring others or ourselves. We may need the help of pastors or friends to determine this.

Most parents I know, however, are too hard on themselves. For them, Keizer provides a reassuring image. "A house where no one ever gets mad might not be any more healthy to live in than a house where no one ever opens a window," he writes. "Aside from the obvious pathological exceptions, I do not think it is the big blows that cause the greatest harm anyway, but rather the constant and petty outbreaks of simmering ill temper—what the poet [Robert] Hayden so aptly calls 'the chronic angers of that house.' "

It's disconcerting to realize that anger is a force that I and my household will always need to harness. Yet it's also strangely comforting to think that I will have many opportunities to practice these commitments. Carla Barnhill, in her book *The Myth of the Perfect Mother*, writes that motherhood—and, I would add, fatherhood—is best conceived not as a job or an identity but as a practice through which we are formed. Drawing from Alasdair MacIntyre's idea that an ethical life includes a cycle of practices that, upon perseverance, turn into virtues, Barnhill conceives of parenthood as not unlike Scripture reading, fasting and worship. Only through practice are such spiritual disciplines able to form us into the likeness of Christ. "What matters in the practice of mothering is our willingness to be open to God's work in our lives, our ability to grow and change with our children, our vulnerability and honesty in the face of the challenges that every brand of spiritual development presents," Barnhill writes.

When we view parenting as a spiritual discipline, Jesus' answer to his disciples' question about how often they should forgive suddenly doesn't sound so exaggerated. "Seventy times seven" sounds low, actually, when one considers the unrelenting practice of parenting.

In fact, in light of my commitment to peacemaking and my consistent inability to live it out, "seventy times seven" doesn't sound anything like drudgery or obligation. It sounds a lot more like a second and third—and 490th—chance for one fuming, tired parent to find God's grace.

Valerie Weaver-Zercher, Mechanicsburg, Pa., is a writer and editor and mother of three small sons. She attends First Church of the Brethren in Harrisburg as well as an Anabaptist house fellowship. She also serves as poetry consultant for The Mennonite.

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Breath

How to stop picking figh

by Jan Johnson

Mondays at work are tough anyway, but when your child calls from camp, that's a bad sign. When Donna's telephone rang, she was typing reports and thinking about how she wouldn't have to rush home that night to see what mischief 13-year-old Justin had been into. When Donna answered the telephone, Justin said, "I wanna come home."

Immediately Donna felt her blood pressure rise. He's sick, she thought. He broke his leg. But Justin was lonely because his friend was ignoring him. Donna explained that she couldn't leave work to get him, but she kept going back and forth in her mind all day—should she try to figure out a way to get Justin? No, she shouldn't. Donna decided to let Justin stick it out, but her heart was still hurting for him.

Donna and I had been experimenting with practicing the presence of God, and work and family life had gone much better for both of us as we turned our normal, mundane thoughts into prayers. We talked about what she could pray regarding Justin at the moment. Here's what we came up with:

- Thought: Justin's so upset and unsure of himself. Prayer: peace.
- Thought: Church camps these days sometimes include rappelling. Prayer: safety.
- Thought: Justin needed to learn more than Bible facts, but even more—he needed to love God. Prayer: heart for God

Justin's camp experience wasn't perfect, but Donna thinks he learned about finding peace with God and himself. So did she.

One of the most difficult things about parenting is the arguments you pick with yourself in your head: Should I? Shouldn't I? There's a lot of blaming and shaming: Why can't I be a wiser parent? It's easy to become overwhelmed and let feelings swallow us up.

That's why it's helpful and healing to be carrying on a conversation with God all day long. When we're moving back and forth with God, kindness and caring can subtly invade those arguments. We stop berating ourselves and think, What does my child need? Turning the situation over to God helps us relinquish our efforts to control circumstances and make life come out perfectly for our children.

prayers

ith yourself as a parent

But what good can it be to mutter simple prayers such as peace and safety? Plenty. Sometimes we make prayer too complicated. Praying isn't like filing a legal brief but like having a conversation with someone who loves us and can, literally, read our minds. The point of prayer is not to be eloquent but to keep the conversation going with the One who never gets tired of us.

Besides, short prayers have a rich history. Often called "breath prayers," they were used by early Christians and usually consisted of nine syllables or less. They are composed of a few words or a phrase that express the deepest longings of the heart. Now, as parents living in a time when we have to fill out children's medical forms in triplicate, get them a social security number before they can talk, and check the rating of every movie they ask to see, it's such a relief to pray for our children on the spot in a simple way. It's not that lengthier, thorough prayers are unwarranted. They have a place, but so do breath prayers. Meant to be said over and over, they're especially handy with a child who wears you down. Meant to be short and to the point, they occur to you just when you're ready to say (or shout) something you'll regret. But saying the same words over and over throughout the day—isn't God offended by the repetition? God is a parent who never tires of us coming to him. He's delighted to see us. In fact, we can make it our goal to drop in and out of prayer all day long.

A breath prayer often comes from Scripture, as Donna's prayer, peace, comes from the fruit of the Spirit. A favorite of mine is, "Into thy hands" from Jesus' struggle on the cross. When I have done everything a parent can do—guided them, cheered them on—but nothing seems to help, I can surrender my children into God's hands one more time.

Another of my favorite breath prayers is, "Show me the heart of this child" because it has a mellowing and insightful effect on me. If I catch one of my children lying, this prayer gives me a tender heart to wonder why they lied. What was my son or daughter feeling? My children aren't always good at verbalizing feelings, so I have to fish around, asking: "Did you lie because you figured that if you told me the truth I'd get mad at you?" Too often the answer is yes.

That signals me to take a deep breath and offer, "Next time, I'll try harder to respond calmly. The truth will probably upset me, but I won't scream, and you won't die. Just tell me. So next time, will you try to tell me the truth? Maybe you'll want to warn me that it will upset me. That might prepare me to try to stay calm." Your children know when you have a heart for them and that builds trust between you.

By turning thoughts into prayers, we can pray for our children nearly every time we think of them. What a relief to grow into a relationship with God where we can pray simply and enjoy being at peace in God's presence all day long!

The point of prayer is not to be eloquent but to keep the conversation going with the One who never gets tired of us.

Jan Johnson is a retreat speaker and the author of Growing Compassionate Kids. *For more information, visit: www.janjohnson.org.*

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Security:

We must find the courage to claim our security in God.

by James R. Hertzler

Security is a buzzword today. Its opposite, insecurity, is all around us. We see it in economics, with the implosion of immense corporations, top executives going to prison and employees losing billions in retirement benefits. An edgy stock market, terrorist threats and frequent security checks remind us of potential dangers to life as we used to know it. Bird flu, mad cow disease and HIV/AIDS lurk around us; shrinking glaciers and disappearing forests signal important climate change.

And ever before us is the war in Iraq, which has made neither Iraqis nor Americans feel any safer. While a new department of public safety has been created in Washington, there is some question as to whether it has made Americans much more secure. Neither has nuclear danger gone. The intentions of Iran and North Korea are not clear. And the superiority of the United States in nuclear weaponry may lead to anxiety in other nations as to what we might do with that power. How long will India, Pakistan, Russia and China accept that imbalance? (See Benjamin Schwarz in *The Atlantic Monthly*, January/February.)

Americans now feel something of the insecurity much of the world has known since before history was written. And we do not like it. According to Jim Wallis in *God's Politics*: "We seem to want something nobody can give us—to erase our vulnerability. We just want it to go away." In spite of our knowledge of history and of the current desperate condition of many people in the world, we act oblivious to the fact that most Third World people have always known insecurity. Many have insufficient food, contaminated water and little access to medical care. Civil conflict and ethnic cleansing have affected many. Natural disasters have hit poor people hard, both here and abroad. Diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria are decimating populations worldwide. Insecurity is a way of life for billions of humans in the 21st century.

Can these folks teach us that we can make do with less and still live fully? Can we learn from them how to share generously what is available to us? Can our faith enable us to live joyfully without total security?

Bishop John Shelby Spong spoke to this last question in *A New Christianity in a New World*: "Security is so seductive and insecurity so frightening. True religion enables us to grasp life with its radical insecurity and live it with courage. It does not aid us in the pretense that our insecurities have been taken away … radical insecurity is the very mark of our humanity."

To be alive as humans is to face uncertainty, confront our fear and expect the unexpected. Groundedness in a loving faith builds a stable core that gives the faithful a chart to navigate the jungle of the 21st century.

The Apostle Paul recites the experiences he endured as he traveled about the Mediterranean: "I've been flogged five times with the Jews' 39 lashes, beaten by Roman rods three times, pummeled with rocks once. I've been shipwrecked three times and immersed in the open sea for a night and a day. In hard traveling year in and year out, I've had to ford rivers, fend off robbers, struggle with friends, struggle with foes. I've been at risk in the city, at risk in the country, endangered by desert sun and sea storm, and betrayed by those I thought were my brothers" (2 Corinthians 11:24-27 *The Message*).

In Romans 8:38-39, Paul explains the central core that stabilized him through his numerous hardships: "Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love

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t possible?

Groundedness in a loving faith builds a stable core that gives the faithful a chart to navigate the jungle of the 21st century.

for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not back stabbing. … None of these fazes us because Jesus loves us. … I am convinced that … absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us" (*The Message*).

In 1986, my wife and I were inspired by a motto on a convent wall of the Sisters of Loreto in a South African 'homeland': "Be Merry and Doubt Not the Master." These aged nuns were living joyfully in a dark time in a frightening place as apartheid was in its death throes. They returned from an Ash Wednesday service with ash crosses on their foreheads to play games with us and tell amusing stories as they served a nourishing snack. Their security was their belief that they were following God's way for them in that time and place.

History shows the risks and consequences absorbed by those who defied danger and found security in obedience to their faith. Sir Thomas More and Anabaptists Dirk Willems and Mayeyken Wouters were 16th-century individuals who suffered martyrdom as they expressed their faith in their unique ways. Security for them was following God's will.

One can find many more recent examples of people who have followed their conscience in a time of great insecurity. Mahatma Gandhi was knocked about by South African and British authorities. Martin Luther King Jr. faced down hostile authorities and, like Gandhi, paid with his life. Doctor and theologian Albert Schweitzer invested his life and skills in Africa. His vision of giving medical help to people in a needy place was opposed by his family as well as a mission agency that was suspicious of his liberal theological orientation. He persevered in his purpose and spent most of his life building and maintaining a hospital in what today is the country of Gabon. He died there at the age of 90. Pearl Buck was the daughter of missionaries in China. She and her family lived in extremely turbulent times in China—years of unrest, rebellion and revolution in the first part of the 20th century. Her many publications helped introduce Westerners to some of the customs and values of rural China. Andre Trocme and the French village of La Chambon faced terrible danger as they sheltered thousands of Jewish people and other refugees from Nazi reprisals. Nelson Mandela endured more than 20 years in harsh confinement because of his concern for his people.

we join
r brothers and sisters
history
and around the world
in living fully,
loving wastefully
and being all
we can be.

The same compassion is true today of Christian Peacemaker Teams. These courageous individuals do not wait for security before acting according to their consciences. They find confidence in the knowledge that they are responding to the needs of those much less secure.

Resoluteness can be found in the belief that one is doing the right thing. Each of the above models can inspire us today. We must find the courage to claim security and even joy in living in our unsettled times, trusting that God is watching over God's people. May we join our brothers and sisters in history and around the world in living fully, loving wastefully and being all we can be as advocated by Bishop Spong in the book mentioned above. We can sing with the Psalmist in Psalm 4:8(NIV):

"I will lie down and sleep in peace
For you alone, O Lord,
Make me dwell in safety."

James R. Hertzler is retired from teaching history at Goshen (Ind.) College and is a member of College Mennonite Church in Goshen.

What are we waiting for?

Berry Friesen is a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Last winter my adult Sunday school offered a class on Christian hope. It seemed a fitting topic for Advent, when we remember the long wait for the Messiah and reflect on our own impatience. The class also provided an opportunity to address a nagging concern: the popularity of Left Behind eschatology and our lack of preparation to articulate an alternative.

Our text was the Bible. Starting with the prophets, continuing into the New Testament and with emphasis on the writings of Paul, we read passages that referred to the future. Always we asked, What was the writer waiting for and how did he describe the future? The writings of Mennonite theologian Tom Finger and the guest lectures of retired bishop Paul Zehr supplemented our study of the Bible.

Thirteen weeks is a short time to study such a big topic. We proceeded cautiously and without reaching firm conclusions. All the same, we encountered some surprises.

For starters, we found less support than expected for the contemporary belief in the immortality of the soul. For most Old Testament writers, death marked a return to the dust and a silencing of praise to God. This view carried over into the New Testament, especially the writings of Paul, who wrote in 1 Timothy 6:16 that "it is Christ alone who has immortality." Apart from Christ, Paul seemed to regard death as having the last word; we would simply perish.

The New Testament is filled with references to eternal life. But Paul at least seemed to understand eternal life as a part of the new creation God had initiated in Jesus. Usually he linked it to the return of Christ to earth. Then "those who belong to Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:23) would join Christ in a physical resurrection and "put on immortality" (15:53-54). As for the time between death and Christ's return, we found relatively little in the Bible to guide us.

We also were surprised by the differences among biblical writers in what they expected to happen to this earth. Many apocalyptic writers described a terrible end for the earth and the references to fire in the third chapter of 2 Peter often have been interpreted that way. But in Romans 8, Paul wrote that creation itself will be saved. The Gospel accounts of Jesus quieting the storm suggest that in Christ God's renewal of creation has already begun. We also found help in Finger's teaching that 2 Peter describes the "proving and testing" of creation, not its destruction.

These texts seemed to say our eternal home will be this earth, the place God called good at the beginning and sent his only Son to save.

Taken together, these texts seemed to say our eternal home will be this earth, the place God called good at the beginning and sent his only Son to save. The decisive event ushering us into this glorious future will not be your or my death but the return of our Lord to earth. As Paul described it in 1 Corinthians 15, "the trumpet will sound and the dead will rise imperishable and we will be changed … then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'"

What about premillennialism, postmillennialism and amillennialism? We resisted at first but then tried to learn the basics. After some discussion, we understood how the assumptions of each (especially premillennialism) continue to shape our attitudes about the environment, Middle East politics, technology and the mission of the church.

This brings me to the primary conclusion that emerged from our class: out of a desire to avoid obscure and speculative debate, the church often has abandoned this subject to popular authors. Much of what we are soaking up from these authors is reassuring. But it is largely unexamined and may not be Christian hope at all.

Here is where we need our pastors and teachers to help. As they do, my hunch is we will look forward to a considerable degree of continuity between this life and the next. Then, paraphrasing the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, we will be better able to remain steadfast, excelling in the work of the Lord, because we know that in the Lord our labor in this life is not in vain.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Pastoral sabbaticals**—Keith Harder
- **An average Joe**—Marlin Birkey
- **It's a great ride**—Robert Hartzler

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Elkhart, Ind., building project approved

Executive Board also agrees to urge U.S. Senate apology to Native peoples.

Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board traveled to California to tour buildings that will house the San José 2007 convention, but an office building in Elkhart, Ind., was the major item on the board's agenda (See "Elkhart, Ind., Project on Hold," July 18).

In executive session on Sept. 22, the board agreed to move forward with a $9.8 million campaign to construct and endow an office building adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus in Elkhart.

The building will provide office space for Mennonite Mission Network staff, Executive Leadership staff and other denominational agencies. Projected occupancy date is spring 2010.

Sharon Waltner, moderator-elect, led the discussion and described the process as "challenging." But the board "performed according to its policies of discernment, was respectful of various viewpoints expressed by board members and finally acted for the good of all in Mennonite Church USA," Waltner said after the meeting.

The current building at 500 South Main Street in Elkhart has suffered at least 18 water leaks in the past three months, said Ron Byler, associate executive director for Mennonite Church USA. Byler also said an interim move from the current facility may be necessary.

Bill Hostetler, Mennonite Mission Network board member, listed several reasons for a joint effort to build and endow such a facility: a shared need, the benefit to the church when members see the Executive Board and Mennonite Mission Network working together and the financial success the constituency would witness.

Stanley Green, executive director for Mennonite Mission Network, said he appreciates the care given to this process.

"We feel that through this process we have been able to launch a true partnership between the [mission] network and the Executive Board," Green said after the meeting.

Green said the building will "create a sense of place and identity" for the new denomination, as well as freeing up resources to be used more directly for programming.

The building's basic plan has remained the same throughout the decision-making process, said Peter Graber, Mennonite Mission Network's senior executive for advancement. "The basic function and cost is nailed down," he said.

Graber said the major reasons to move ahead now with building included construction costs that are rising faster than inflation, the cost of the campaign itself and the potential loss of momentum and confidence in the campaign.

The Executive Board also adopted a recommendation to include a $150,000 contribution to the Global Mission Fellowship in the total cost of the project.

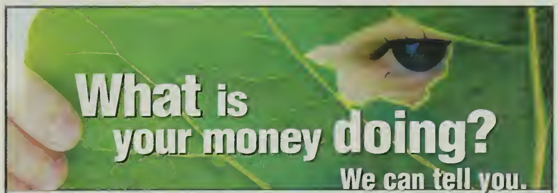
The next phase of the capital campaign will focus on securing cash and pledges from 10 to 15 donors. According to Graber, this "quiet phase" of fund-raising will begin immediately.

In other matters, the board heard an update on the process of hiring a director for Executive Leadership's Intercultural Relations Office. An appointment will be made in several months.

Native American leader Steve Cheramie Risingsun and Olivette McGhee, Executive Board member, also asked the board to support a resolution that was brought before the U.S. Senate in April 2005. The resolution requests an apology for the long history of wrongdoings against Native peoples.

The board agreed to write a letter to the Senate supporting the resolution, report this action to the delegates at San José 2007, invite them to do likewise, show the video at San José, and urge those planning worship for the convention to include a churchwide apology to Native peoples at the joint youth and adult worship service.—*Anna Groff*

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org



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4,000 Iranians hear Mennonite speakers

Theologians meet Iran's President Ahmadinejad, offer gift and prayers.

Three Mennonite scholars participated in a conference in Tehran, Iran, devoted to study of the "science of messianism," also known in Shi'a Islam as "Mahdism Doctrine." The Bright Future Institute of Qom, Iran, organized and hosted the conference Sept. 6-7.

David W. Shenk, global consultant with Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa., Thomas N. Finger, independent scholar at Reba Place Church, Evanston, Ill., and N. Gerald Shenk, professor of church and society at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., were invited as guests and contributors to continue a series of exchanges between Mennonite leaders and the religious leadership of Iran that stretches back for most of a decade.

The September gathering in Tehran drew more than 100 international participants and an estimated 4,000 Iranians. Leading ayatollahs and Iranian President Ahmadinejad were key speakers at the conference.

The figure of the Mahdi in Shi'a Islam is identified as the 12th imam in succession after the prophet Muhammad. In Mahdist doctrine, this imam is understood as being hidden but not dead for the past 11 centuries. After a lengthy period of injustice and immorality, he is expected to return to establish justice and restore righteousness on earth. Although not all Muslims—especially in majority Sunni branches—share this identification and hope, the doctrine is gaining substantial attention in Iran today. Allusions to Christian teaching are frequent, and in some versions the return of Jesus Christ and the expected Mahdi figure are linked. A display in the conference lobby prominently looped a video that said, "Do you know Jesus Christ is coming soon? And the Mahdi comes right after that!"

Muhammad Legenhausen of the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute in Qom commented on the significance of having Christian views presented within a religious conference in Iran. He said that in his 16 years of observation, previous conferences have involved primarily Muslims speaking to Muslims, even if some incorporated Sunni and Shi'a differences.

"To have a Christian voice present without being antagonistic is tremendous," Legenhausen said. He has encouraged the numerous contacts that Mennonite scholars and leaders have pursued with their counterparts in Iran.

David Shenk, in direct conversation with President Ahmadinejad after his opening address, handed the president a copy of his well-known text, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* (co-authored by Badru Kateregga). He also inquired about ways Christian leaders might help facilitate the ongoing dialogue Ahmadinejad's May letter to President Bush invited.

Finger said that in his brief meeting with President Ahmadinejad he told the president that many Christians in the United States are praying for him and for the peace and welfare of Iran.

"He thanked me," Finger said.

The two-day conference elicited 260 scholarly papers, of which three volumes were published in Farsi in time for distribution at the conclusion conference.—*Gerald Shenk*

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Survey says 27,000 read *The Mennonite*

Highest interest is in letters to the editor, Grace and Truth and editorials.

According to data from this year's survey of readers, 27,619 people read *The Mennonite*. This is up from the readership level estimated by the 2005 survey; it showed a readership of 24,056. The readership rate is especially important to advertisers, since they want their messages to be seen by as many people as possible.

Each year *The Mennonite* sends a questionnaire to approximately 400 subscribers. This year, surveys were sent to 425 subscribers, and 283 were returned. By doing the survey every year, magazine staff members can track trends among readers—including what they most like to read.

According to the 2006 survey, letters to the editor (pages 4-5), the Grace and Truth column (page 2) and editorials (page 32) are the most-read sections. The least-read parts of the magazine are classified ads, the Calendar and Leadership columns.

The survey also tracks demographics such as gender balance and racial/ethnic makeup. According to the survey, slightly more women than men read the magazine (51 percent), and 5 percent are from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

The annual survey projects a readership total by asking how many other people see a subscriber's copy of the magazine. Responses to that question establish a "passalong rate" for the approximately 11,500 copies printed.

As an incentive for readers to fill out the questionnaire, those who wish can enter their names into a drawing for a free subscription. Sarah Shirk, Chicago, won the free subscription this year.

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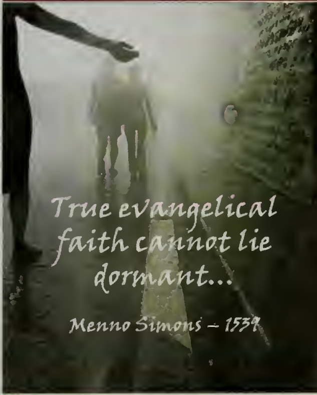
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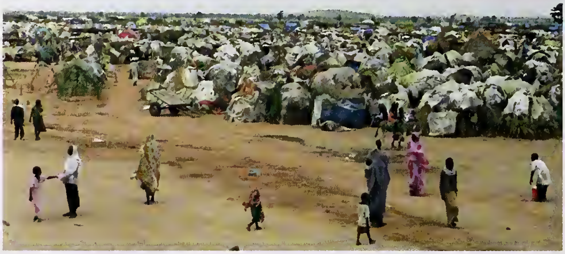
Rapes and killings continue in Darfur

Mennonite Central Committee ships wheat, sponsors trauma workshops.



John Robinson

Two million people have been displaced by the ongoing conflict in Sudan's Darfur region. This photo of Otash camp, near the town of Nyala, South Darfur, was taken in 2004.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is shipping 4,000 metric tons of wheat to Sudan as one of the world's worst humanitarian crises continues in the country's Darfur region. Fighting continues in Darfur, where a civil war erupted three years ago, despite a peace agreement between the government and one rebel faction in May. Hundreds of thousands of people have died in the conflict, and about 2 million have been displaced into camps.

William Reimer, MCC's director for food, disaster and material resources, visited Darfur in July and says the region's civilians are in greater danger than ever. A 7,000-member African Mission peacekeeping force is scheduled to leave the country at the end of September. The government of Sudan is strenuously resisting calls for a U.N. peacekeeping force in Darfur, Reimer says.

In partnership with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, MCC is providing the wheat to the United Nations World Food Program for distribution in Sudan, with about 70 percent going to Darfur.

"The U.N. is out of food as of December, so this shipment is timely," Reimer says.

MCC is sponsoring trauma healing work in displacement camps in Darfur and is preparing to support conflict mediation work between community leaders.

Reimer met a Sudanese trauma counselor, Elizabeth Cornelia, who described her work with displaced people.

"She talked about the terrible trauma that so many people in Darfur still experience," Reimer reports. "The rape and killings continue."

Cornelia provides camp residents with materials to make mats and beds to employ themselves productively. Few formal employment opportunities are available to camp residents.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

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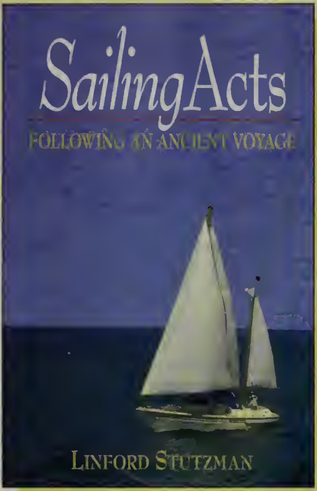

The Stutzmans' first voyage, just 16 miles long, involved a near collision with another boat, torrential rains, seasickness, and difficulty anchoring before a bemused crowd of spectators.

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CALENDAR

Oct. 15, 7:30 p.m., John Ruth, historian, storyteller, writer and filmmaker from Pennsylvania, will discuss the ***"Migration of Mennonites & Brethren from Pennsylvania to Virginia"*** at the **Bridgewater Church of the Brethren**, 420 College View Drive, Bridgewater, Va. The public is invited and donations will be accepted in support of the Valley Brethren-Mennonite (CrossRoads) Heritage Center.

31st Annual Rocky Mountain Mennonite Relief Sale and Auction, Oct. 20-21, 2006, **Fairgrounds, Rocky Ford, Colo**. All proceeds go to the work of Mennonite Central Committee; 719-384-7914 or 719-481-2527 or visit www.rmmcsale.org.

Fall Meeting to feature the Reverend Steven R. Estes, Oct. 28,10 a.m. at the **Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center**, 675 State Route 116, Metamora, IL 61548. Rev. Estes' presentation is entitled "These Stones" which will examine the value of cemetery research for both family and local history. Call 309-367-2551 or send an email to imhc@mtco.com for more information.

WORKERS

Dey, John, was installed as lead pastor on Sept. 10 at Warwick River Mennonite Church, Newport News, Va.

Erb, Ross, was ordained as associate pastor for children and youth at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va, on Aug. 20.

Linthicum, Jeff, was licensed as pastor at Pine Creek Chapel, Arcadia, Fla., on Sept. 8, and installed on Sept. 17.

Miller, Joel, was installed and licensed as pastor at Cincinnati (Ohio) Mennonite Fellowship on Sept. 10.

Riddle, Chris, was licensed toward ordination for ministry in Italy on Sept. 24 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bert, Davis Reid, July 14, to Daryl and Carrie Stambaugh Bert, Austin, Texas.

Brenner, Allyson Brooke and **Ashley Michelle** (twins), Aug. 13, to Levi and Kym Lepley Brenner, Akron, Ohio.

Company, Alyssa Marie, April 25, to Jeff and Candace Company, Clinton, Ill.

Fehr, Summer Madison, June 18, to Abe and Denita Fehr, Winkler, Manitoba.

Friesen, Mackenzie Jade, July 19, to James and Andrea Friesen, Altona, Manitoba.

Guengerich, Carter Ross Peifer, Aug. 29, to Larry and Kendra Peifer Guengerich, East Petersburg, Pa.

Koke, Anna Elizabeth, Sept. 6, to Michael and Sandra Brickell Koke, Winterborne, Ont.

Litwiler, Waylon Dean, Sept. 7, to Jason and Angela Tackett Litwiler, Hopedale, Ill.

Louviere, Dawson James, Aug. 17, to D.J. and Toby Martin Louviere, Metairie, La.

Makoyo, Leah Marie Atieno, Aug. 27, to Jacob and Gwen Makoyo, Norristown, Pa.

McAdams, Grace Elleman, July 18, to Brian McAdams and Angela Elleman, Philadelphia, Pa.

McHugh, Ian James Stoltzfus, May 25, to Michael and Heidi Stoltzfus McHugh, Goshen, Ind.

Nester King, Emma Marlene, July 8, to Darvis and Shelly Nester King, Normal, Ill.

Robichaux, Arianna Maribel, Nov. 4, 2005, adopted Sept. 8 by Lee and Vanessa Villasenor Robichaux, Raceland, La.

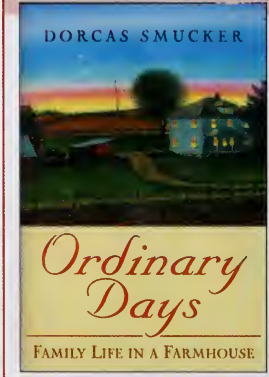
Robichaux, Olivia LeeAnn, July 31, to Lee and Vanessa Villasenor Robichaux, Raceland, La.

Welch, Kyra Leigh, Aug. 20, to Steve and Carol Ness Welch, Lititz, Pa.

Zehr, Jaron Kenneth, May 5, to Randy and Holly Zehr, Normal, Ill.

Zimmerly, Caden Michael, Sept. 1, to Scott and Heather Reber Zimmerly, Wooster, Ohio.

"Eloquent Wonder in 'Ordinary' Life."
— *Mennonite Weekly Review*



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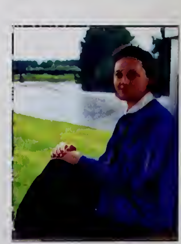

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MARRIAGES

Bardo/Martinson: Alisa Bardo, Minneapolis, Minn., and Andy Martinson, Minneapolis, Aug. 12 at Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis.

Bohar/Hertzler: Justina Bohar, Arlington, Va., and Brad Hertzler, Washington D.C., Sept. 2 at Landisville Mennonite Church, Pa.

Brenneman/Halteman: Sara Brenneman, Broadway, Va., and Steve Halteman, Souderton, Pa., July 15 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Brubaker/Sheu: Brian Brubaker, Pittsburgh, Pa., and Yah-Tyng Sheu, Pittsburgh, July 22 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

Burkhalter/Kraybill: Andrew Burkhalter, Seattle, Wa., and Sarah Kraybill, Seattle, Aug. 5 at Camp Camrec, Plain, Wa.

Clementz/Ward: Joe Clementz, Ft. Jennings, Ohio, and Cherri Ward, Ft. Jennings, June 25 at Pike Mennonite Church, Elida, Ohio.

Fehr/Voth: Robyn Fehr, Rosetown, Manitoba, and Jason Voth, Altona, Manitoba, Aug. 19 at the Fehr farm.

Flaming/Grout: Sara Flaming, Newton, Kan., and Marc Grout, Marion Kan., July 22 at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan.

Goering/Swain: Christopher Goering, Pretty Prairie, Kan., and Nicky Swain, Wauseon, Ohio, Sept. 2 at First Mennonite Church, Pretty Prairie.

Greider/Troup: Justin Greider, Indianapolis, Ind., and Andrea Troup, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 2 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Harding/Long: Sarah Harding, Pocomoke, Md., and Jensen Long, Accident, Md., Aug. 12 at Holly Grove Mennonite, Westover, Md.

Harmer/Poindexter: James Harmer, Seaford, U.K., and Sarah Poindexter, Waynesboro, Va., Aug. 12 at Corpus Christi College Chapel, Cambridge, U.K.

Harnish/Reinford: Donna Harnish, Richmond, Va., and Neil Reinford, Lancaster, Pa., June 24 at Hinkletown Mennonite Church, Ephrata, Pa.

Keeler/Nussbaum: Matt Keeler, Bluffton, Ohio, and Katie Nussbaum, Kidron, Ohio, July 8 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Lehman/Suppes: Seth Lehman, Apple Creek, Ohio, and Danielle Suppes, Apple Creek, Aug. 19 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Mast/Shue: Craig Mast, Smithville, Ohio, and Krista Shue, Kidron, Ohio, July 29 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Steiner/Zuercher: Joy Steiner, Mt. Eaton, Ohio, and Tim Zuercher, Orrville, Ohio, June 10 at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

McNutt/Stauffer: Paul McNutt, Stone Creek, Ohio, and Amy Stauffer, Stone Creek, Sept. 2 at the home of parents, Bruce and Suzanne Stauffer, Stone Creek.

Mishler/Newburn: Don Mishler, Goshen, Ind., and Nina Newburn, Goshen, Sept. 3 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Mullet/Slabach: Nicholas Mullet, Berlin, Ohio, and Kimberly Slabach, Sugarcreek, Ohio, June 16 at Walnut Creek Mennonite, Ohio.

Wengerd/Williams: Isaac Wengerd, Minneapolis, Minn., and Anne Williams, Minneapolis, Sept. 17 at Gale Woods Farm, Minneapolis.

DEATHS

Allan, William J., 89, Louisville, Ohio, died Aug. 31 from congestive heart failure. Parents: William and Elizabeth Johnstone Allan. Funeral: Sept. 8 at Sunset Memorial Cemetery, North Canton, Ohio.

Amstutz, Cletus, 77, Orrville, Ohio, died Aug. 12 from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident. Parents: Elmer J. and Etta Steiner Amstutz. Funeral: Aug. 17 at Martins Mennonite, Orrville.

Bontreger, Sam C., 87, Farmerstown, Ohio, died Sept. 9. Spouse: Betty Schrock Bontreger (deceased). Parents: Crist and Dena Hochstetler Bontreger. Children: Gordon, Sheldon, Karen Fleming, Debra Gilbert, Phyllis Williams, Annette Bond; 11 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Walnut Creek Mennonite, Ohio.

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"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA.

Derstine, Alma D. Kulp, 86, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 21. Spouse: Samuel N. Derstine. Children: Emilie Walson, Leon, Harley, Rodney; 14 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 25 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Fisher, J. Kenneth, 83, Chester Springs, Pa., died Aug. 23 of leukemia. Spouse: Julia Heitman Fisher. Parents: Stephen and Lavina Hooley Fisher. Children: Joel K., Larry A., Gayle; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 26 at Frazer Mennonite Church, Pa.

Geiser, Marie Ewing, 88, Bluffton, Ohio, died July 5. Spouse: Paul Geiser (deceased). Parents: Harry and Cleah Cummans Ewing. Children: Ronald, John; seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 9 at Chiles and Sons Laman Funeral Home, Bluffton.

Goehring, Melvin C., 67, Freeman, S.D., died Aug. 20 from surgery complications. Spouse: Marilyn Jean Wagner Goehring. Parents: Andrew and Martha Kreiger Goehring. Children: Linda Murphy, Randy, Kelly Boese, Anita Hoff, Doris Higgins, Bonnie Tschetter; 12 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 25 at Salem Mennonite, Freeman.

Hostetler, Edna Irene Hershberger Gascho, 93, Kalona, Iowa, died Aug. 29. Spouse: Clarence Hostetler. Spouse: Wallace Gascho (deceased). Parents: Ephraim and Dorinda Kempf Hershberger. Children: Charleen Marner, Eugene Gascho, Gale Gascho; eight grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 4 at East Union Mennonite, Kalona.

Kamp, Margaret Hartman, 93, Washington, Ill., died Sept. 10. Spouse: Orville Kamp (deceased). Parents: William and Grace Ferner Hartman. Children: Corrine Boehr, Warren; three grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington, Ill.

Leatherman, Mabel W. Keeler, 91, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 21. Spouse: Elmer D. Leatherman (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Addie R. Keeler. Children: Geraldine Halteman, Dale; 11 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 24 at Souderton Mennonite Home.

Markley, Glenn F., 56, Harleysville, Pa., died Aug. 9 of cancer. Spouse: Carol S. Markley. Parents: Ephraim and Naomi Freed Markley. Children: Crystal R. Kerns, William S.; four grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 13 at Williams-Bergey-Koffel Funeral Home, Franconia, Pa.

Mast, Henry A., 90, Glendale, Ariz., died Sept. 3. Spouse: Hazel Gingerich Mast. Parents: Abe and Sarah Schrock Mast. Children: Cliff, Ada Hollman; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Glencroft Retirement Center, Glendale.

Miller, Verna Sauder, 81, Archbold, Ohio, died Sept. 1. Spouse: Floyd E. Miller. Parents: Edward and Wilma Wyse Sauder. Children: Terry, Craig, Merrill, Becky Kauffman, Eileen Nyce, Elaine Winzeler; 15 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 5 at Tedrow Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Neuenschwander, John, 66, Kidron, Ohio, died Aug. 5 of cancer. Spouse: Dee Geiser Neuenschwander. Parents: Menno and Elda Steiner Neuenschwander. Children: Lynn Kauffman, Brad, Sharon Neuenschwander, Jodie Stoltzfus; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 6 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Rittenhouse, Sara Moyer, 89, Souderton, Pa., died Sept. 13. Spouse: Samuel Z. Rittenhouse (deceased). Parents: William and Valaria Moyer. Children: Philip; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 17 at Souderton Mennonite Home.

Smoker, Abner K., 90, Phoenix, Ariz., died Aug. 19. Spouse: Viola Smoker Smoker. Parents: David Smoker and Mary Kauffman Smoker-Lapp. Children: Myrna Cramer, Arlan, LaVon Miller; 10 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 25 at Best Funeral Home, Peoria, Ariz.

Stutzman, Fern Mast, 60, Elkhart, Ind., died Sept. 5 from a head injury sustained in a fall. Spouse: William Stutzman. Parents: Raymond and Polly Yoder Mast. Children: Sheila Terlep, Mike; five grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Stutzman, Mary K. Schlabach, 54, Berlin, Ohio, died Sept. 7 of cancer. Spouse: Paul V. Stutzman. Parents: Roy and Evelyn Hershberger Schlabach. Children: Rodrick, Melissa Stutzman, Kristin Thomas; one grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 10 at Walnut Creek Mennonite, Ohio.

Local people serving the insurance needs of Mennonites and Brethren in Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

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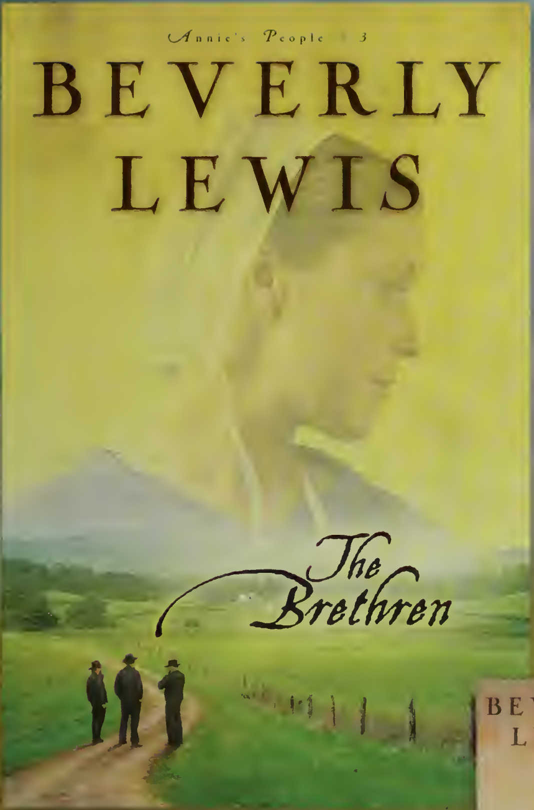

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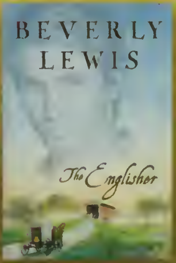

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To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

Bluffton University invites applications for the following full-time tenure-track faculty positions to begin fall 2007:

Accounting: Academic preparation in accounting and/or substantial professional accounting experience required. A terminal degree (Ph.D. or functional equivalent) is desired. Candidates who have an MBA/MA in accounting and CPA or other professional accounting certification will be considered. Teaching responsibilities are in multiple areas of accounting. Ability to teach in areas related to information systems is desirable. The position is lodged within the department of Economics, Business Administration and Accounting. Teaching at the graduate and undergraduate level is expected. Review of applications begins immediately and continues until appointment is made. This appointment may be earlier than fall 2007 depending on candidate availability.

Economics: Academic preparation in economics or closely related field, such as political economy, economic systems, economic history or international development. An understanding of both mainstream and alternative economic paradigms is highly desirable. A terminal degree (Ph.D. or functional equivalent) will be required for tenure. Completing this degree after employment is acceptable. Demonstrated competence in teaching is essential. A successful candidate will teach undergraduate economics and economics-related courses, as well as courses in the graduate program in business. The economics major is lodged within the department of Economics, Business Administration and Accounting and is one component of a values-based liberal arts curriculum. Review of applications begins Dec. 1 and continues until appointment is made.

Education—early childhood: Doctorate preferred and required for tenure; ABD considered. Areas of specialization are open but preference given to candidates with interests in literacy and/or language development. Minimum three years teaching experience in elementary schools; college-level teaching experience in a teacher licensure program highly desirable. Teach undergraduate and graduate education courses in curriculum and instruction in early childhood education including literacy courses. Supervise teacher education candidates in various field and clinical practice settings. Serve as academic advisor to teacher education candidates. May include teaching in the general education curriculum. Review of applications begins Nov. 15 and continues until an appointment is made. Bluffton University Teacher Education program is NCATE accredited.

Education—special education: Doctorate preferred and required for tenure; ABD considered. Minimum three years teaching experience in P-12 settings; college-level teaching experience in a teacher licensure program highly desirable. Teach undergraduate and graduate education courses for teacher licensure as intervention specialists including instructional models and learning theories, classroom management, assessment and special education law. Supervise clinical practitioners in special education classrooms. Serve as academic advisor to teacher education candidates. May include teaching in the general education curriculum. Review of applications begins Nov. 15 and continues until an appointment is made. Bluffton University Teacher Education program is NCATE accredited.

Psychology: Ph.D., ABD or international equivalent required upon appointment. Evidence of excellence in teaching and ability and interest in mentoring students. Areas of specialization are open but preference will be given to candidates with interests in applied social, cross-cultural, community or industrial-organizational psychology. Responsibilities will include teaching a variety of courses in the major. Opportunities exist to teach across disciplines including sociology, peace and conflict studies, master's program in organizational management and in the general education program. Review of applications begins Nov. 1 and continues until an appointment is made.

Compensation for these positions is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Send letter of interest, curriculum vita or resumé, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or if necessary from placement office) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. See www.bluffton.edu. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Director of nursing: The current DON is transferring to a new role in the organization, creating this opportunity in a supportive team-oriented environment for an RN with long-term care and supervisory experience. A bachelor's degree in nursing or other health-related field is preferred. This full-time salaried position is responsible to fulfill duties and coach the supervisory team within the framework of a resident focused environment and in collaboration with other departments. Apply to **Landis Homes**, 1001 E. Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543, phone 717-581-3936, fax 717-581-3899 or email aheinly@landishomes.org. For more information about Landis Homes, visit our Web site www.landishomes.org. Landis Homes is located in a rural setting southeast of Lititz, Pa.

Western Mennonite School seeks ***full-time public relations manager*** to lead communications, public relations and event-planning efforts. Other responsibilities include writing and providing marketing/communication support for fund-raising and admissions. Qualifications include bachelor's degree in related field and strong organizational, interpersonal and leadership skills. Contact Andrea Wall at dwall@westernmennoniteschool.org or 866-343-9378. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students locally and various states and countries. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

Sharon Mennonite Church, a congregation of 260 in rural central Ohio near Columbus, invites applications for the position of ***full-time youth pastor***. Individual should have a zeal for Christ and passion for youth. Will give oversight primarily to the senior MYF and junior MYF, but also leadership to young adult ministries. Congregational information available upon request. Contact chair of search committee Glenn Hochstetler at 7675 Amity Pike, Plain City, OH 43064 or email sharonmenno@yahoo.com.

Coaldale Mennonite Church is seeking to hire a ***full-time senior pastor*** to provide leadership to a pastoral team and a multigenerational membership of 300. The succesful candidate will be committed to Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, have leadership experience, will be gifted in preaching, teaching and visitation. Preferred starting date Mar. 1, 2007. Please respond by Nov. 17 to Search Committee, phone 403-345-6728 or fax 403-345-6758

English conversation teachers needed! **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

Education

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Development director needed for full-time Christian ministry at **Spruce Lake Retreat**, a multifaceted, dynamic camp/retreat ministry serving 25,000 people annually in the Pocono Mts. of northeastern Pennsylvania, closely affiliated with Mennonite Church USA. This person creates numerous, efficient and compelling opportunities for ministry support and coordinates these into a comprehensive, integrated program. Currently the program includes a major capital campaign along with annual fund-raising events, pledge and planned giving programs. Ideal candidate is a passionate advocate of Christian camping, experienced in nonprofit fund-raising or in sales/sales management in a customer-oriented environment, persistent, positive and connected with the Mennonite community in eastern Pennsylvania. Salary and liberal benefits package provided. On-camp housing may be available, or person may work from their eastern Pennsylvania home. Resumé: Mark Swartley, Executive Director, Spruce Lake Retreat, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505 x 118; fax 570-595-0328; email slrjobs@sprucelake.org.

West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship is a creative urban Anabaptist community seeking a ***full-time pastor***. We are a 20-year-old congregation with an average attendance of 80 consisting primarily of young adults and families. Members are active in leading worship, preaching and all aspects of church ministries. For more information about the church go to www.wpmf.com; for more information about the pastor position contact Drick Boyd 610-341-4360.

Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church is seeking two pastors to provide leadership for its two worshiping fellowships. ***Lead pastor of Sanctuary Fellowship*** should have strong preaching gifts and experience with a multistaff congregation (or similar). ***Lead pastor for Praise Fellowship*** should have vision/experience in a more expressive, contemporary worship setting. These two pastors will join with the church administrator to form a leadership team for HMC. HMC is a large, multistaff congregation, with a strong commitment to worship, outreach, service and missions. Contact Frederic Miller at fmiller@hmcchurch.org or 540-434-4463 for initial information. Visit www.hmcchurch.org for more detail.

Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for a ***director of development***. This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. The successful candidate will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment and be available to begin employment between August 2006 and July 2007.

Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net.

Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

Seattle Mennonite Church (SMC) is seeking a compassionate leader to serve in its new, full-time position of ***community minister***. This person would continue the development and administration of SMC's ministry to the homeless community in its neighborhood, serving as a member of the ministerial team and work in collaboration with the current task force. Experience and/or training in urban outreach, particularly with homeless populations, preferred. If interested, please contact Karen Solberg at 206-361-4630 or email at kmpatterson@netsmc.net. Please respond by Oct. 15.

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James E Brenneman

Growing Wisdom & Wonder

THE PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION OF
DR. JAMES E. BRENNEMAN

GOSHEN COLLEGE
SEPTEMBER 8-10, 2006
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It really is empty in this nest

Michael A. King is pastor of Spring Mount (Pa.) Mennonite Church, editor of *DreamSeeker* and dad bird to three birds.

A writer should use fresh images, but the empty nest has turned itself so fully into my experience that I'll join rather than try to beat the metaphor. Clearly it has staying power. A Google search for "empty nest" returned 6.22 million results. And for months if I stopped to gaze at what was in my mind I'd see that I was, without having consciously decided to picture myself this way, a big bird sitting on a nest, out in the yard where that robin's nest was when our daughters were still in our nest. I'd see myself sitting at nest's edge looking for the birds who had once cuddled with me.

It hadn't even happened yet. Two birds were still in the nest this summer. One was preparing for a year of Mennonite Central Committee service in Swaziland, the other for Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. Even Oldest Bird and her husband visited us from their own nest in Olympia, Wash., when we took Middle and Youngest Birds on a last trip before they left the nest. But there in that still half-full nest I saw myself already sitting in emptiness. Then the nest did empty. Now here in the emptiness I sit—with some feelings and thoughts.

The empty nest is a big deal. I knew that in theory, but theory and life are never the same.

The empty nest is a big deal. I knew that in theory, but theory and life are never the same. I cared about friends whose nest emptied first. I understood that here was a big change. I laughed sadly when I heard of the friend who on losing his son to overseas adventure and his daughter to college within the same week reported to his wife the realization that they had made one fatal mistake: They had had children. Yes, I listened then. But now I really get it. Let me whisper this only to those who already get it, so you young ones don't stop having babies: If you knew how much it would hurt when you got here, you'd never start.

The nest really does feel empty. When we came home after saying goodbye to Youngest Bird at college, at first all the places I taught her to drive felt empty, except for the tears, dripping across that appropriately rainy night. Then we went into the house. No one was there. After 25 years, no one was there. When she left for college, Youngest Bird had left her room light on, as she always does because the room feels friendlier to her, she says, never mind the electricity I beg her not to waste. There was the light, waiting for her. Joan and I sat on her bed, crying, looking for courage to turn off the light. Then we went into all their empty rooms. And the rooms were very empty.

When they fly out of the nest, they fly into your heart. We also noticed an interesting thing: The nest was empty, but our hearts were full. When the last one left the nest, all the birds immediately flew back into our hearts. Suddenly our hearts were full of birds, overwhelmed with birds. Birds of every age, from teeny-tiny to older, all flew crazily around in there, being born, getting their diapers changed, learning to walk, trying to put the milk cap on but the milk would just spill, playing the piano or not practicing the piano even when scolded, becoming teenagers and awkward, hating their braces, looking a little Ugly-Duckling-ish even to parents before each became the swan whose beauty took your breath away. There they all were, scores of them, hundreds of them, beating in and breaking our hearts.

We are who live in the empty nest. Next, full of birds, we sent all birds tender emails. No bird quickly answered. One bird did explain she had read our many emails—"six?" as she put it—and was so sorry but so busy making friends at parties. We had imagined her broken-winged. And other tendernesses did eventually dribble in. But the baby birds just don't seem to have the parent birds' urgent feelings about the nest emptying. We've come to understand: We are the ones here in the emptiness; they're out there flying.

We'll be OK in here. In an empty nest, it turns out, things are peaceful. Things are safe—no more running shoes and book bags to fall over. You can catch a breath in here. So it's going to be OK. But it's going to take a while not to hear a bird at every turn. And we do look more longingly out at the sky—down toward Virginia, far away toward Olympia, far far away toward Swaziland—than we used to.

Mennonite
Church
USA

Pete Prunes, Nereida Babilonia and their children Bianca, Jacob, Sierra, and Isabel Prunes on a family outing at the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Building up the church — by tearing down walls

It starts with embracing diversity – not only within the congregation, but also in how that congregation defines community. Take Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in northeast Philadelphia, where Pete Prunes and his wife, Nereida Babilonia, have found their home. Neither comes from a traditional Mennonite background. And both are now actively involved in this diverse congregation.

Like many other Mennonite Church USA congregations, Oxford Circle is joyfully following Jesus into the world. They know it's "not just about Sunday." It is about love that comes from faithfully following Jesus. And about supporting each other every day, serving the community, opening doors to a new relationship with God. Today's Mennonite Church USA congregations are dynamic. And they are inviting new families – no matter where they come from or how they were raised – to see and serve the world from a uniquely Christian Anabaptist perspective.

Joyfully following Jesus *We* **are Mennonite Church USA** www.MennoniteUSA.org

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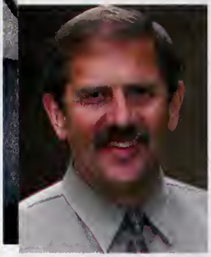

Everett J. Thomas

Do worry, be happy

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God. … For God all things are possible.
—Mark 10:25 and 27

The relationship between Christian faithfulness and material wealth popped up in several places recently: *Time* magazine's Sept. 18 cover framed the issue this way: Does God want you to be rich? And, recently we ran some stories about Mennonites who are exceedingly generous with their wealth (Aug. 15). In response, several readers wondered why only Mennonites with means were lifted up and why nothing was said about closing the wealth gap between the global North and global South (Readers Say, Sept. 19).

So what is the relationship between wealth and salvation? Mark records one of Jesus' clearest teachings: Rich people can enter the kingdom of God, but only by God's mercy and grace.

I've heard sermons preached on the "camel through the eye of a needle" text, but none that uses the entire incident recorded in Mark 10:17-31. Most end with verse 25 (above). But the story does not end there. After Jesus tells the rich young man—who wanted salvation—that he should sell everything he owns and give the money to the poor, the young man "went away grieving, for he had many possessions" (verse 22). After observing the young man's inability to give up his wealth, Jesus made the "eye of a needle" comment. The disciples were shocked at such a hard teaching and said, "Then who can be saved?"

God can do the impossible: thread a camel through the eye of a needle and save us wealthy people, if He wishes.

Jesus responded that it might not be possible for a human to get a camel through the eye of a needle, but it was possible for God.

But the disciples persisted, saying, "Look, we have left everything and followed you."

It is Jesus' reply to this statement that we don't talk about very much: anyone who leaves everything to follow Jesus will receive "a hundredfold now in this age" (verse 30).

To sharpen the point, Jesus gets specific and names material things such as houses and fields. He also names brothers, sisters and mothers. In other words, anyone who gives up his or her home community for Jesus' sake will be rewarded with even more material wealth and a stronger community during his or her lifetime. Jesus also makes it clear that those who follow him will be persecuted even as their material wealth increases.

This promise could be a basis for Prosperity Lite Gospel teachings—the focus of the recent *Time* article. It also leaves us with a conundrum.

If we believe Jesus' words that when his followers give up everything to follow him they will reap a hundred times more benefits, then it means faithfulness brings material rewards. But if wealth is God's reward for following Christ, then we have at least two problems. First, why are not all faithful Christians millionaires? Second, should we be trying to help all people be as wealthy as we are?

The second question was posed by a leader at the center of Mennonite efforts to help impoverished and starving people. In our Sept. 19 issue, Mennonite Central Committee's executive director, Robb Davis, wondered whether our goal as Mennonites is to help everyone move to the same economic level we enjoy. The counter option is for us all to move to the same level as the impoverished. But few of us are willing to sell everything we have and give the proceeds to the poor. So how will we enter the kingdom of God?

Jesus' answers in Mark 10 are confounding. Wealth is both an impediment to entering the kingdom of heaven and a reward for following Jesus—at least for his first disciples. If we make it into the kingdom of God, it will be because God made that possible—not because of our self-sufficiency.

An old song says, "Don't worry. Be happy." However, those of us with wealth should be worried. At the same time, we can be happy that all things are possible with God, who can thread a camel through the eye of a needle and save us wealthy people, if he wishes.—*ejt*

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The Mennonite

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October 17, 2006

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Sabbaticals for pastors

SABBATICALS
FOR PASTORS

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The dying white horse

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

In July I went to Nicaragua on a two-week delegation with Witness for Peace. The delegation's purpose was to learn about the effects of U.S. economic policies on the people of Nicaragua. We spent time with a variety of folks, from farmers to doctors to government officials, hearing stories of hardship caused in large measure by our government's policies.

In Managua we met with Santos Amador, a Mennonite pastor and an advocate for consumers of privatized electricity. Since privatization, consumers report increased cost for decreased or even nonexistent service. Santos and others help consumers seek justice from the electric company.

Santos spoke at length and with great passion to our group. He offered a long, winding mix of history, politics and theology. He called us to deepen our awareness of how our government and our lifestyles impact his fellow Nicaraguans. It was an intense, emotional and challenging meeting.

In the midst of this astounding display of knowledge and the ability to synthesize varied streams of information, Santos told us he had a word of prophecy for us North Americans. The U.S. empire, he told us, is dying. It had, at most, another 20 years. His words made me tremble.

Some days earlier, while leaving the rural community of Ramon Garcia, I had seen a white horse. It staggered down the road, weaving back and forth, barely missing our bus. Riderless, it looked to be on its last leg.

It occurred to me that the white horse was a sign. From ancient times the white horse has been a symbol of empire. The conquering king came riding in on a white stallion and vanquished his enemies with military power. What better symbol is there for the American Empire, which has added economic policies to its arsenal of weapons, policies whose aim seems to be the subjugation of humanity for the sake of profit?

One need not go to Nicaragua to see the effects of these policies. Consider the state of post-hurricane New Orleans or the conditions of your local public school system or the lack of affordable health care for your neighbors and you will see this policy of profits over people.

Since coming home I have pondered the meaning of that dying white horse and the words of my brother Santos. Is the empire on its last leg? Is U.S. power already fading? If so, what does that mean for me as a citizen of the dying empire?

Perhaps it is time we Christians reconsidered our allegiance to our nation and its policies. Perhaps it is time to return to the symbols of the early church to recall our true identity.

The early church exchanged the white stallion for the donkey Jesus rode into Jerusalem, a symbol of humility and peaceful intent. Early Christians claimed citizenship in the reign of God and understood themselves to be strangers in a strange land whose allegiance was first and always to the Prince of Peace. Early Christians confessed that Jesus was Lord, not Caesar.

If my brother Santos is right, a dramatic change is coming. A change that will impact everyone. His words ought to stir us to rethink our priorities, our relationship to the nation and our connection to sisters and brothers around the world whose lives are made more difficult because of the policies of our government. And even if Santos is wrong, isn't it long past time for us to be that contrast community we read about in our Scriptures?

I pray that we Mennonites, who understand better than some what it means to be in but not of the world, take the lead in becoming such a community—for the sake of the gospel.

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 20, October 17, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Web site: www.TheMennonite.org

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

1251 Virginia Ave.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
phone: 540-434-2556
fax: 540-434-5556

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
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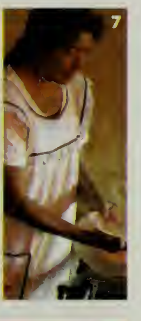
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Cover: Courtesy photo of Tim and Sue Schrag

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Is the church asleep?

I was thankful for Elaine Bryant's article "Blessed Are the Dead Who Die in the Lord" (Grace and Truth, Sept. 19). This article reminded me of some lessons I learned and continue to learn through the unexpected death of my father when he was 48. Death has had a way of putting life into perspective. I have realized that there is both a physical and spiritual death that we face. As we learn to die to ourselves, time and again, we allow ourselves to be transformed more into the likeness of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

One result of our spiritual death is that Christianity, as a belief, becomes more than just a "right way to think." Christianity becomes a behavior, or "the right way to live." We move from simply being in the presence of God to allowing the Spirit of God to transform us in those times of being into a disciple who also does.

Bryant challenges us to find rest. I agree; we need to rest. However, sometimes in the church I wonder if we are already asleep. As a church we are called to be clearly visible in the world by being a people who are different from the world: faithful to our promises, a people who love our enemies, tell the truth, honor the poor and suffer for righteousness. Are we actively doing these things?

Maybe as a church we need to encounter the reality of death more often so that we can put our life, as the body of Christ, into perspective.
—*Lana Miller, Harrisonburg, Va.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Leadership development is one of four long-term goals for Mennonite Church USA—especially pastoral leadership. This issue addresses that goal by focusing on sabbaticals for pastors as well as a troubling trend in pastoral placements. Two pastors describe what they did with their sabbaticals: Tim Schrag (page 10) took a cross-country bike ride. In doing so, he raised almost $50,000 for local helping and peacemaking agencies—and "thrust the congregation squarely into the community spotlight as a peace church." Heidi Regier Kreider (page 12) used her sabbatical to learn Spanish through immersion in a church plant in San Antonio, Texas. By the end of her sabbatical she was able to preach a sermon in Spanish—and translate the pastor's Spanish sermon into English in her own congregation. Diane Zaerr Brenneman, denominational minister for congregational and ministerial leadership, addresses a growing problem: empty pulpits in regions where the Mennonite population is sparse while there are waiting lists for pastorates in high-density Mennonite areas (page 18). Finally, retired pastor Robert Hartzler (page 16) offers counsel about how pastors can survive and have "a great ride."—*Editor*

Let the dead bury the dead

Several of your articles tend to link us with our government. I have never voted in a political election or even registered to vote. It is my sincere belief that there are two different realms in which people abide. There are those who are in this world but not of this world and those who are of this world as well as being in this world. Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead." He assumed there were plenty of people of this world to take care of the business of this world. This includes running the various governments with all their problems and the routine business necessary to keep up their infrastructures.

Christians have a higher calling, a more important mission. We are to go into all the world and make disciples. Yes, we are also to pray for our leaders and support them. Even Jesus said, "If a soldier asks you to carry his baggage for a mile, carry it two miles."

Even though Jesus gave them his support, those same leaders were responsible for Jesus' crucifixion. Yes, he got a rotten deal and an unfair trial. The question remains for each of us: Are we able to answer that higher calling and be vulnerable like him? Or do we want to stay in the background and let the government do our work for us? The harvest awaits, so let's get to work.
—*Ronald Seiler, Spencerville, Ind.*

Response to Oct. 3 articles

Thank you for the honest journalism you share with us readers. Having just looked through the Oct. 3 issue, Valerie Weaver-Zercher's article on anger and parenting was spot on for all of us who have ever taken on that high calling ("One Mean Mennonite Mama"). Parenting needs to be on the list of spiritual disciplines.

Arthur Paul Boers bares his soul struggle about becoming Mennonite in "Dwelling Among Those Who Hate Peace." In this time of compromise, complacency and complicity among "peace churches," this article stirred something deep within me. If there is anything redeeming about those who march off to war at the command of President Bush—who purports to speak for God—it is that they are ready to die for something they are committed to and a noble, if tragically wrong, motive to make our world a better place.

These are times that try our very souls—to paraphrase an earlier call to arms. These are times that call for renewed commitment to the Lamb's War. Again, thanks for what you are doing to clarify the issues and stimulate deeper thinking and, perhaps, a deeper commitment to the peaceable kingdom.—*Joe Haines, Amherst, N.Y.*

How can Amish forgive?

The blood was barely dry on the floor of the West Nickel Mines (Pa.) School when Amish parents sent words of forgiveness to the family of the killer who had executed their children at the school on Oct. 2.

Forgiveness? So quickly, and for such a heinous crime? Out of the hundreds of media queries I received during the following week, the forgiveness question rose to the top. Why and how could they do such a thing so quickly? Was it a genuine gesture or just an Amish gimmick? The world was outraged by the senseless assault on 10 Amish girls. Why would a killer turn his gun on the most innocent of the innocent? Questions first focused on the killer's motivations: Why did he unleash his anger on the Amish? Then questions shifted to the Amish: How would they cope with such an unprecedented tragedy?

In many ways, the Amish are better equipped to process grief than are many other Americans. First, their faith sees even tragic events under the canopy of divine providence, having a higher purpose or meaning hidden from human sight at first glance. The Amish don't argue with God. They have an enormous capacity to absorb adversity—a willingness to yield to divine providence in the face of hostility. Such religious resolve enables them to move forward without the endless paralysis of analysis that asks why, letting the analysis rest in the hands of God.

Second, their historic habits of mutual aid—such as barn-raising—arise from their understanding that Christian teaching compels them to care for one another in time of disaster. This is why they reject commercial insurance and government-funded Social Security, believing that the Bible teaches them to care for one another. Hundreds of friends and neighbors visit the home of the bereaved to share quiet words and simply the gift of presence. After the burial, adult women who have lost a close family member will wear black dresses in public for as long as a year to signal their mourning and welcome visits of support.

Amish faith and culture provide profound resources for processing the sting of death. Make no mistake: Death is painful. Many tears are shed. The pain is sharp, searing the hearts of Amish mothers and fathers as it would those of any other parents. But why forgiveness? Surely some anger—at least some grudges—are justifiable in the face of such a slaughter.

But a frequent phrase in Amish life is "forgive and forget." That's the recipe for responding to Amish members who transgress Amish rules if they confess their failures. Amish forgiveness also reaches to outsiders, even to killers of their children. As pragmatic as they are about other things, the Amish do not ask if forgiveness works; they simply seek to practice it as the Jesus way of responding to adversaries, even enemies. Rest assured, grudges are not always easily tossed aside in Amish life. Sometimes forgiveness is harder to dispense to fellow church members, whom Amish people know too well, than to strangers.

Forgiveness is woven into the fabric of Amish faith.That is why words of forgiveness were sent to the killer's family before the blood had dried on the schoolhouse floor. It was just the natural thing to do, the Amish way of doing things. Such courage to forgive jolted the watching world as much as the killing itself. The transforming power of forgiveness may be the one redeeming thing that flows from the blood shed at the Nickel Mines school.—*Donald B. Kraybill,Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College*

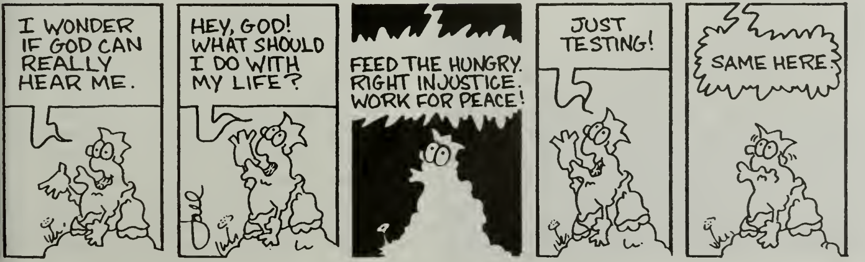
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Regarding pastoral sabbaticals, our congregation: (31 votes)

- ○ Has provided them (68%)
- ○ Has not but plans to (10%)
- ○ Has not and does not plan to (10%)
- ○ Not sure (13%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


I WONDER IF GOD CAN REALLY HEAR ME.
HEY, GOD! WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY LIFE?
FEED THE HUNGRY. RIGHT INJUSTICE. WORK FOR PEACE!
JUST TESTING!
SAME HERE.

IN BRIEF

Preheim named interim director for Historical Committee

Rich Preheim, Elkhart, Ind., has been named interim director of the Historical Committee, effective Oct. 11. He will serve in a half-time role for the next eight-10 months and work with staff in both North Newton, Kan., and Goshen, Ind. Preheim is a former staff person for both *Mennonite Weekly Review* and *The Mennonite*. He is a 1989 graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, in history and a 1992 graduate of Indiana University with a master's degree in journalism. He is currently writing a book on the history of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Rich will work primarily from the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee office in Goshen.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Zambia BIC Church turns 100

The Zambia Brethren in Christ Church and Brethren in Christ World Missions held a centennial celebration Aug. 16-20 at Macha Mission. More than 2,000 people from 150 congregations across Zambia, along with guests from Malawi, Zimbabwe, the Netherlands and North America, including church leaders and former missionaries, traveled to Macha for the celebration. —*Mennonite World Conference*

Missionary Harriet Rutschman dies at 82

Harriet Rutschman

NEWTON, Kan.—Teaching music was a theme throughout Harriet Rutschman's ministry in four Latin American countries, spanning four decades. Known for her focus on relationships with people, she worked alongside her husband, Laverne, in church planting, pastoral ministry and education.

A resident of North Newton, Kan., Rutschman died Sept. 7 at age 82.

Rutschman and her twin sister, Suzanne, were born in Columbus, Ohio, on Aug. 9, 1924, to Carl and Luella Dupre Fischbach. She grew up in the Methodist church, where she developed her skills as a pianist. While attending Wheaton (Ill.) College, she met Laverne Rutschman, from Whitewater, Kan. They were married shortly after graduation in 1942 and served one year at Comins (Mich.) Mennonite Church.

Harriet and Laverne responded to an opportunity to minister in Colombia in 1947 with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the former General Conference Mennonite Church. This first international assignment was in a school and home for children whose parents suffered from leprosy.

In 1955 they helped begin a Mennonite theological seminary in Montevideo, Uruguay. Later they taught at Freeman (S.D.) Junior College and Academy, they went to Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in 1974 to follow up in villages where Mennonite Central Committee volunteers had been present.

They next served from 1977 to 1982 in Costa Rica at the Latin America Biblical Seminary, a leading theological training center with students from many countries. They returned to Colombia in 1983 and spent two years relating to Mennonite churches and a Presbyterian seminary where several Mennonite students were enrolled. Then they served in Costa Rica from 1986 to 1988.

She is survived by her husband, Laverne; sons David, Robert, Tom, Richard and daughter Ruth Holliday; 17 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Courtesy photo

Footprints on the cross

On the final day of Commitment Week, 188 Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School students responded to the question Where am I being sent? by attaching "footprints" to a wooden cross.—*Fern Clemmer*

Amish School Recovery Fund receives gifts

LANCASTER, Pa.—In the wake of the Oct. 2 shootings at the Amish school in Nickel Mines, Pa., Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union has received telephone calls and emails from credit unions throughout the United States and Canada expressing concern and asking how they can help. Mennonite Financial president, Larry Miller, is directing those wishing to make contributions to the Amish School Recovery Fund set up by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). As of Oct. 10, more than $140,000 had been contributed.

Mennonite Financial donated $5,000 to the Amish School Recovery Fund from its "rebate for missions" program, through which the credit union tithes 10 percent of its interchange income from its Visa credit cards. The Pennsylvania Credit Union Foundation has matched this grant of $5,000, and the Pennsylvania Credit Union Association has authorized an additional $2,000 to be sent to MCC.

MDS is acting as a conduit for financial donations to the Amish community. Monies collected will be distributed by an Amish accountability group. Donations can be made at mds.mennonite.net using a credit card or checks may go to MDS with the words "Amish School Recovery Fund" in the memo line.—*Mennonite Financial Credit Union and Mennonite Disaster Service*

And the award goes to ...

A plethora of awards has gone to various Mennonite organizations and individuals in the past month.

The Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SWEFOR) has awarded the SWEFOR Prize for Nonviolence 2006 to Justapaz for its work in Colombia. Justapaz is the acronym for the Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action, a ministry of the Mennonite Church in Colombia for the past 16 years. Jenny Neme, direc-

Matthew Lester

er living through less smoke

jilda de Jesus García's Mennonite Central Committee
releases far less smoke than her previous stove and uses
rewood. The stove, which has a pipe that sucks smoke up
ut of the house, is part of MCC's efforts to improve fami-
ves and health in this rural village in the Mexican state of
ero.—*MCC*

tor of Justapaz, traveled to Sweden to receive the award in Stockholm on Sept. 23.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates has made the short list for the $1 million Alcan Prize for Sustainability. MEDA, based in Waterloo, Ontario, was selected one of 10 finalists out of a field of 200 applicants from 55 countries. The prize, one of the most prestigious in the development community, is sponsored by Alcan Inc, a Montreal-based global aluminum and packaging products company. Alcan created the prize in 2004 to recognize outstanding contributions in economic, environmental and social sustainability by not-for-profit, nongovernmental and civil society organizations.

Howard Zehr, a professor of restorative justice at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., is the 2006 recipient of the annual Community of Christ International Peace Award, one of the world's top awards for work in the peace field. The award comes with $30,000, which will go to EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding. In addition, *The Journal of Law and Religion* gave Zehr its Lifetime Achievement Award at a ceremony on Oct. 5 at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn.

The Goshen (Ind.) College Alumni Board has given the 2006 Culture for Service Award to Goshen College alumni Ed Metzler '52 and Ethel Yake Metzler '46 and Glen E. Miller '57, all of Goshen. On Oct. 6, Lisa Koop '99, a lawyer at the National Immigrant Justice Center in Chicago, received the second annual 2006 Decade of Servant Leadership Award. The 2006 Dr. Ruth Gunden Champion of Character Award went to Sally Hunsberger '86 of Washington, and the Dr. Roman Gingerich Champion of Character Award went to Don Jantzi '72 of Goshen.—*Mennonite World Conference, MEDA, Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen College*

Congolese representative calls for support

AKRON, Pa.—The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo need the support of the international community during their current struggle to form a democratic government, according to Epampia Mbo Wato, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) representative in the country.

Congo is preparing for a runoff presidential election in late October after more than 40 years of rule by unelected leaders. Wato, who is Congolese, spoke about this political situation during a monthlong visit to churches, advocacy groups and congressional offices in the United States.

"What we want is that the international community be fair to the two candidates and accept the candidate people choose and work with him," Wato says.

The Congolese people have suffered greatly under decades of dictatorship and two recent wars, and Wato suggests that the United States bear some responsibility for this because of its longtime support for Mobutu Sese Seko, the late Congolese dictator.—*MCC*

Tuesdays with Sunnyside Mennonite Church

LANCASTER, Pa.—Every Tuesday night, rain or shine, an extended-cab pickup pulling a trailer stops at Sunnyside Mennonite Church. Volunteers fire up a grill, and soon children and adults from the neighborhood gather under the carport and in the basement for a feast.

Tuesdays at the House (T.A.T.H.) has been going on for over a year. Begun by Darryl and Janice Weaver, it is part of the missional outreach of Sunnyside. Often 30-40 children and adults gather on Tuesdays. They do crafts and play table games.—*Brian Miller*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

Fall enrollment numbers at Mennonite schools

	2005	2006
Bethel College	514	539
Bluffton University	1,211	1,155
Eastern Mennonite University	902	916
Goshen College	922	951
Hesston College	477	462
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary	185	192
Eastern Mennonite Seminary	141	114

IN BRIEF

Peace activists acquitted in Ireland

Five peace activists dubbed the "Pitstop Ploughshares," who belong to the Catholic Worker movement, went on trial in Ireland on charges of damaging a U.S. military transport plane during the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Two earlier trials collapsed, but in a 12-day trial in July, the five pleaded not guilty, arguing they inflicted the damage to prevent the deaths of Iraqis, men and women serving the U.S. military and Irish civilians in danger of retaliatory attacks by terrorists. A Dublin jury of seven men and five women agreed and acquitted all five. *—The United Church Observer*

Poor women have more unwanted pregnancies

According to research by the Guttmacher Institute (www.guttmacher.org), nearly a half million unwanted pregnancies, including 200,000 that would end in abortion, could be prevented each year if Medicaid coverage were expanded to include contraception for low-income women. Previous research by the institute showed that the unintended pregnancy rate for poor women went up 29 percent between 1994 and 2001, while it decreased 20 percent among more affluent women. *—The Christian Century*

SABBATICALS

FOR PASTORS

Sabbaticals for pastors

Making the

by Keith Harder

Heidi Regier Kreider and Tim Schrag (see pages 10-13) represent a growing number of pastors and the congregations they serve who are benefiting from sabbaticals. Sabbaticals have had a long tradition in academia, but increasingly congregations are also seeing the value of granting sabbaticals to their pastors. Over 40 percent of the pastors who responded to the 2005 Mennonite Church USA Pastor Compensation Survey indicated that they have had or are expecting to receive a sabbatical. It appears that the recommendation in the Mennonite Church USA Pastor Salary Guidelines that pastors receive a three-month sabbatical is being followed increasingly.

Sabbaticals require planning and preparation—for the pastor and the congregation.

As Heidi and Tim's stories indicate, sabbaticals require planning and preparation—for the pastor and the congregation. The congregation must plan for how pastoral tasks will be covered during the sabbatical. In some congregations this may involve engaging an interim replacement, perhaps at less than full time. It may also involve mobilizing resources within the congregation for worship planning, preaching and administration, with other pastoral resources on standby for pastoral emergencies. In some congregations this has provided new opportunities for people to test gifts for ministry. Some congregations have a line item in their budget every year for sabbatical expenses to help pay for these expenses during the sabbatical year.

Sabbaticals are especially useful in keeping the pastor-congregation relationship fresh and vital over a long tenure. Intentionally disrupting established routines and expectations can be refreshing and revitalizing for pastors and congregations. The most fruitful sabbaticals are those seen as mutually beneficial—to the pastor and the congregation.

Intentionally disrupting established routines and expectations can be refreshing and revitalizing for pastors and congregations. The most fruitful sabbaticals are those seen as mutually beneficial—to the pastor and the congregation.

heart sing

There is great variety in what pastors actually do during sabbaticals. For some, the time is focused on formal education, perhaps working on or completing a seminary degree or another course of study. It may include formal classes, assignments and the development of specific ministry skills. For others it is a time for informal learning that may involve seminars, reading, visiting other congregations, developing proficiency in a new language or exposure to another culture. Yet another focus may be an intentional focus on being quiet, prayer, meditation, extended retreats—a period of rest and being fallow. Some have found that a service assignment that involves learning new skills or using skills not normally used in pastoral ministry provides a refreshing and rewarding sabbatical experience. Sabbaticals sometimes combine these various elements.

The Lilly Endowment has generously funded the National Clergy Renewal Program. It invites proposals in response to the question What will make your heart sing? The program's purpose is to "strengthen Christian congregations by providing opportunities for pastors to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily parish life and engage in a period of renewal and reflection. Renewal periods are not vacations but times for intentional exploration, for regaining the enthusiasm and creativity for ministry, for discovering what will make the pastor's heart sing."

Renewal is what characterizes the best sabbaticals—renewal of one's call to ministry, renewal in one's relationship with God, renewal of the imagination of what God is doing in the world through the church and renewal of strength and vitality for ministry.

Tim and Heidi and hundreds of other pastors and the congregations they serve can testify to the renewing affect of a deliberately planned time away—time dedicated to renewal. May other pastors and congregations who could benefit from a sabbatical also have that opportunity.

Keith Harder is director of Congregational and Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

Sabbatical resources

Pastor Sabbatical Program at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Pastoral Sabbatical, Church Leadership Center at www.ambs.edu)

The Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations at www.lillyendowment/religion.html.

SABBATICALS

FOR PASTORS

A kind of

How one congregation helped its pastor ride 4,190 miles and raise $50,000

by Tim Schrag

Pastoral sabbaticals ideally generate payoff for both pastor and congregation. Personal rest and renewal activities help energize the pastor. Congregations benefit from sabbaticals, which further congregational goals. My sabbatical (May-August 2005) from Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.) paid off in both ways.

At first glance, my core sabbatical activity may seem a crazy idea with benefit to no one. With wife Sue and cousin Wendell Miller (from Bluffton, Ohio), I spent 11 weeks bicycling 4,190 miles across the country. However, this Virginia-to-Oregon adventure had a name and a focus. We called our odyssey Pedaling for Peace. We raised almost $50,000 for a variety of local helping and peacemaking agencies, as well as Chicago Mennonite Learning Center in Chicago and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. For us it fulfilled a major dream and became personal renewal at its best. It also thrust the congregation squarely into the community spotlight as a peace church.

Looking back, the following factors seemed integral to the success of the sabbatical:

1. The sabbatical planning was rigorous and intentional. Twice we applied for sabbatical funding from the Lilly Foundation, and twice we were turned down. But the application process goaded us into thorough, purposeful planning. We were challenged to articulate how sabbatical activities matched congregational goals. What evidence is there of congregational support? How will the pastor's family be involved? How does the sabbatical fit the persona of the pastor and the congregation and the applicant's family? Does the sabbatical include elements of physical, emotional and spiritual renewal? Answering these questions caused us to think through the sabbatical from every angle. The bottom line was, How will this make you a better person and a better pastor for this particular congregation at this particular point in time? Great questions for any congregation to ask prior to a sabbatical. This disciplined thinking produced a sabbatical "owned" by the Mennonite Church of Normal. There was a sense that "this is our project, not just Tim's sabbatical in which he leaves us to do his thing."

There was a sense that "this is our project, not just Tim's sabbatical in which he leaves us to do his thing."

crazy thought

Adventure: Tim and Sue Schrag climb a hill on their bicycle ride across the United States in summer 2005.

2. Congregational leadership was willing to think outside the box. A kind of crazy thought grew because key, creative congregational leaders didn't throw cold water on it. The final form was not the same as the original idea. Worth noting is that the planning for the sabbatical took two years to finalize. The end product was well thought through and understood by a high percentage of the congregation.

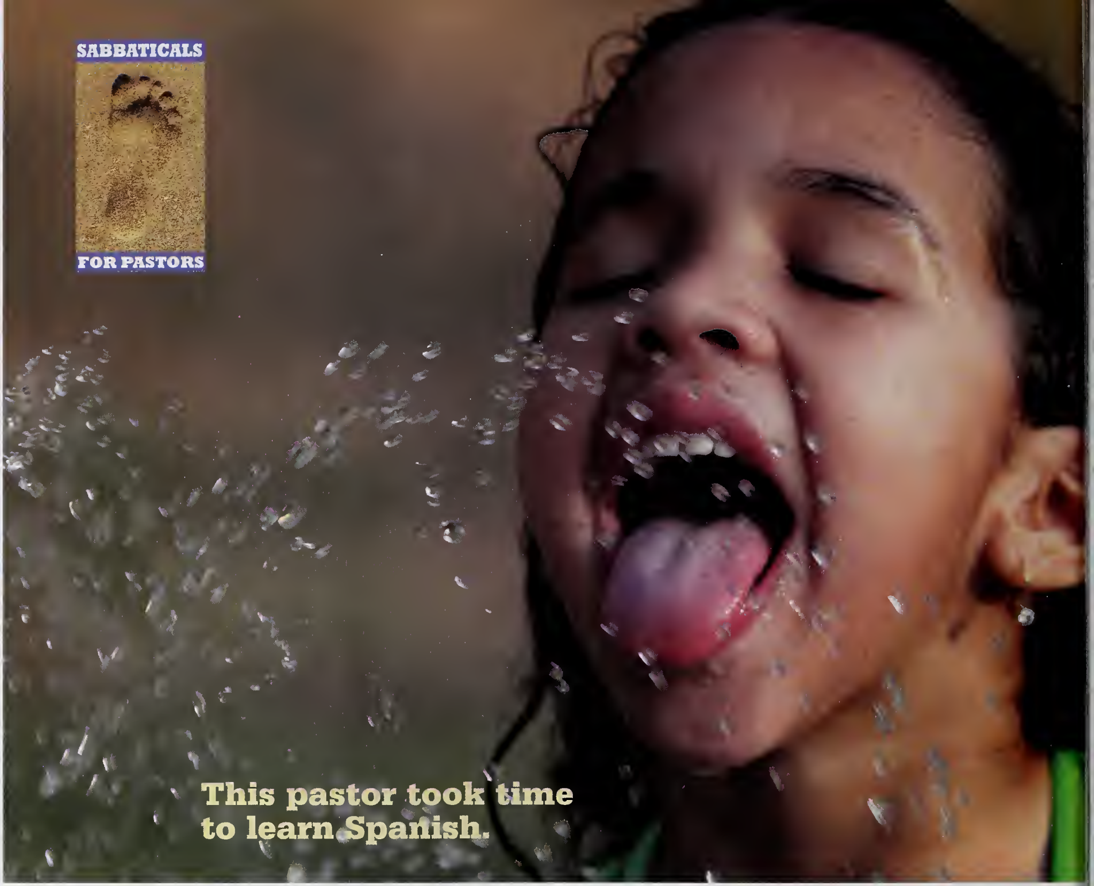
3. We stayed in touch during the sabbatical. Sometimes sabbaticals are treated almost like a period of pastoral uncleanliness; don't come near, contact me or bother me; stay away. Our approach was the opposite. We reported in frequently through an online journal, welcomed several congregants who rode with us for three days, and maintained selective email and phone contacts. We felt that during the sabbatical we were still a part of the congregation, although the nature of the relationship changed for those four months.

4. The sabbatical design allowed us to name and celebrate concrete outcomes. Put simply, the sabbatical worked. Specifically, our congregation had set a goal of being a more visible, missional peace church in our community. Pedaling for Peace resulted in new relationships with the peacemaking groups (our peace partners). One year later, these relationships continue to bear fruit. There was significant media coverage before, during and after. The sabbatical "bought" us and our cause thousands of dollars of community visibility. Finally, our peace partners were able to use monies raised to promote peace. It felt good to know how our congregational goal was significantly advanced in these three ways.

Sue and I had an adventure we will forever treasure. Four thousand miles on a bicycle leaves plenty of time to think, ponder, plan and pray. Our minds and spirits were cleansed, our bodies strengthened, our marriage enriched and my pastoral ministry energized.

Tim Schrag is pastor of Mennonite Church of Normal, Ill.

SABBATICALS FOR PASTORS



This pastor took time to learn Spanish.

A longtime dream

by Heidi Regier Kreider

At Bethel College Mennonite Church, the personnel policy states that a full-time pastor is eligible for a three-month sabbatical leave after completion of four years of service and each succeeding four years thereafter. The leave should be for a specifically approved plan, such as the pursuit of study, renewal, reading, in-service training or the like, related to the pastor's work and from which the congregation and its programs are likely to benefit. I became eligible for a sabbatical in September 2004. After consultation with other members of the church staff, the staff supervisory committee and church board, I made plans to take a sabbatical January through March 2005.

I had a longtime dream to learn Spanish and used sabbatical time to further that dream. Why Spanish? I was born in Mexico as the child of mission workers, but we moved when I was 2 years old. Church work and travel later brought me in contact again with Spanish-speaking people, and I sensed that Spanish was something familiar buried within me, waiting to be used.

Spanish is spoken increasingly in our local community due to immigration from Latin America, and one area of growth in Mennonite Church USA is among Spanish-speaking congregations. As a pastor and Mennonite Mission Network board member, I felt learning Spanish would help me follow God's call to cross ethnic and racial boundaries. I wanted to study Spanish while nurturing relationships in the church. Might I spend time in a Spanish-speaking Mennonite congregation with whom I could have ongoing contact through Western District Conference (WDC) connections?

I called Marco Gueté, WDC associate conference minister for Texas, for advice. He suggested I contact Blanca and Victor Vargas, church planters from Colombia who were planting a Mennonite congregation in San Antonio, Texas. They graciously welcomed me to live with their family for a time and participate in the life of their church, Iglesia Menonita Comunidad de Vida.

To prepare, I took a beginning Spanish class during the fall of 2004, then spent six weeks in San Antonio during my sabbatical in February-March 2005. I entered into daily life with Blanca, Victor, a teenage son and two young-adult daughters: cooking, shopping, hosting guests, attending soccer games, watching Spanish television. Blanca and I shared devotions together, reading and discussing Scripture in Spanish. At Comunidad de Vida I played piano for worship, taught piano lessons and organized a food pantry and clothes closet for homeless people. The congregation embraced me in both joys and struggles. We celebrated at a baby shower and pitched in to help a family move to another apartment after a kitchen fire forced their evacuation. I joined Blanca and a Mennonite Central Committee social worker in visiting households to survey local residents about their economic, social and spiritual concerns. I shared meals in members' homes and attended a church-planting support committee meeting with representatives of Comunidad de Vida and San Antonio Mennonite Church. My time there ended with Holy Week: I preached in Spanish on Palm Sunday, shared in a Maundy Thursday love feast and celebrated Easter with this community that had so warmly welcomed me as part of the Spanish-speaking body of Christ in San Antonio.

Since then I have had other opportunities to practice my fledgling Spanish, such as auditing more classes and hosting a guest speaker from Puerto Rico. Following this summer's WDC sessions at Bethel College, I invited Blanca to preach at my congregation, where I translated her sermon from Spanish to English. It was a tremendous gift to me to return hospitality after the warm welcome I received in San Antonio. My dream is coming true—but I must keep living it out.

Learning a new language is humbling, like being a child again.

My sabbatical affirmed Jesus' words, "Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Learning a new language is humbling, like being a child again. It puts you in a position of vulnerability and risk, dependent on hospitality and correction from other people. I hope my experience will not only make me a better pastor but encourage my congregation to be open to change, to be vulnerable to the Spirit's leading and to cross barriers so that we might more fully enter the reign of God here on earth.

Heidi Regier Kreider is pastor of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

An average Joe—and proud of it

Freedom from the need to compare oneself to others and hide one's weaknesses

by Marlin Birkey

I am an average man, nothing more, nothing less. I've always been average and forever will be in this earthbound life. God created me average and has not instilled in me the capacity to rise above it. If that seems like bad news, the good news is that neither do I have the capacity to sink below it. I am an average man.

You are an average person as well. No matter who you are or what you've done, you will never be anything other than average. High achiever or underachiever, graduate or dropout, first place finisher or last place finisher, it makes no difference. You are, and forever will be, an average person.

God is the one to blame—or thank. God created us as human beings. We are not God and do not have the capacity to be God. We are human, and to be human is to be average. Average means a mixture of good and not-so-good. In school, an average grade is composed of some marks above average and some below. Throw them all together and you get average. Each of us is a glorious mixture of some good qualities and some not-so-good qualities. Throw them all together and you get average.

I am free to accept God's unconditional love that comes to me in each moment, exactly as I am—free from the crushing sense that I must be better than I am to get and keep God's approval.

If this annoys you, and I suspect it might, it is likely because you would rather define yourself by your strengths. So would I. I do some things well. I have some wonderful qualities that stand out and are admirable, perhaps even enviable. We all have wonderful qualities. We should rejoice in them; they are gifts from God who fully intends that others be blessed and inspired by them.

But to define ourselves by them is false, not because those things aren't true but because they are only half the picture. The other half is equally true. We are people of weakness, failure and vulnerability. We don't have it all together and are sometimes confused about how things are or what we should do. We simply are not good at some things, we will finish dead last in some races, if we finish at all.

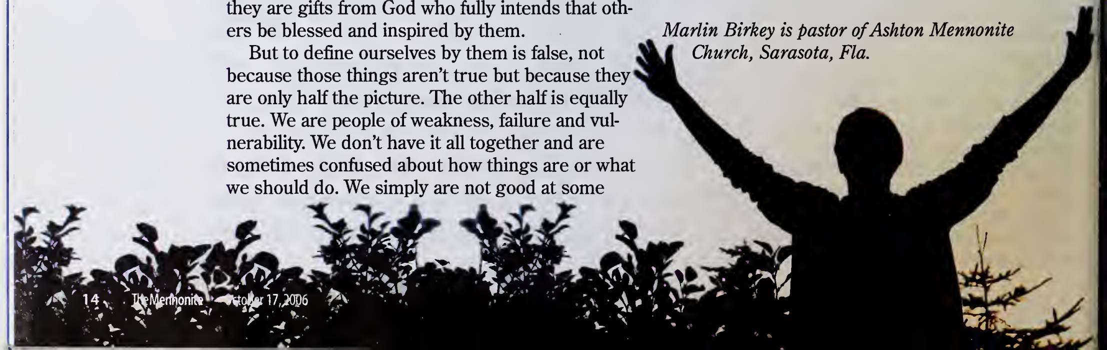
The lie is as alluring today as it was in the Garden of Eden—"You can know as God knows." In other words, you can rise above the limitations of humanity. While other mere mortals may wallow around in weakness and vulnerability, you can be something more, something "above average." Adam and Eve went for it, and so did I. Perhaps you did also. I wanted to define myself by my strengths because it allowed me to think of myself as better than others. My logical mind wouldn't allow me to think of myself as perfect, but I didn't find it too much of a problem to consider myself in the upper tier of humanity.

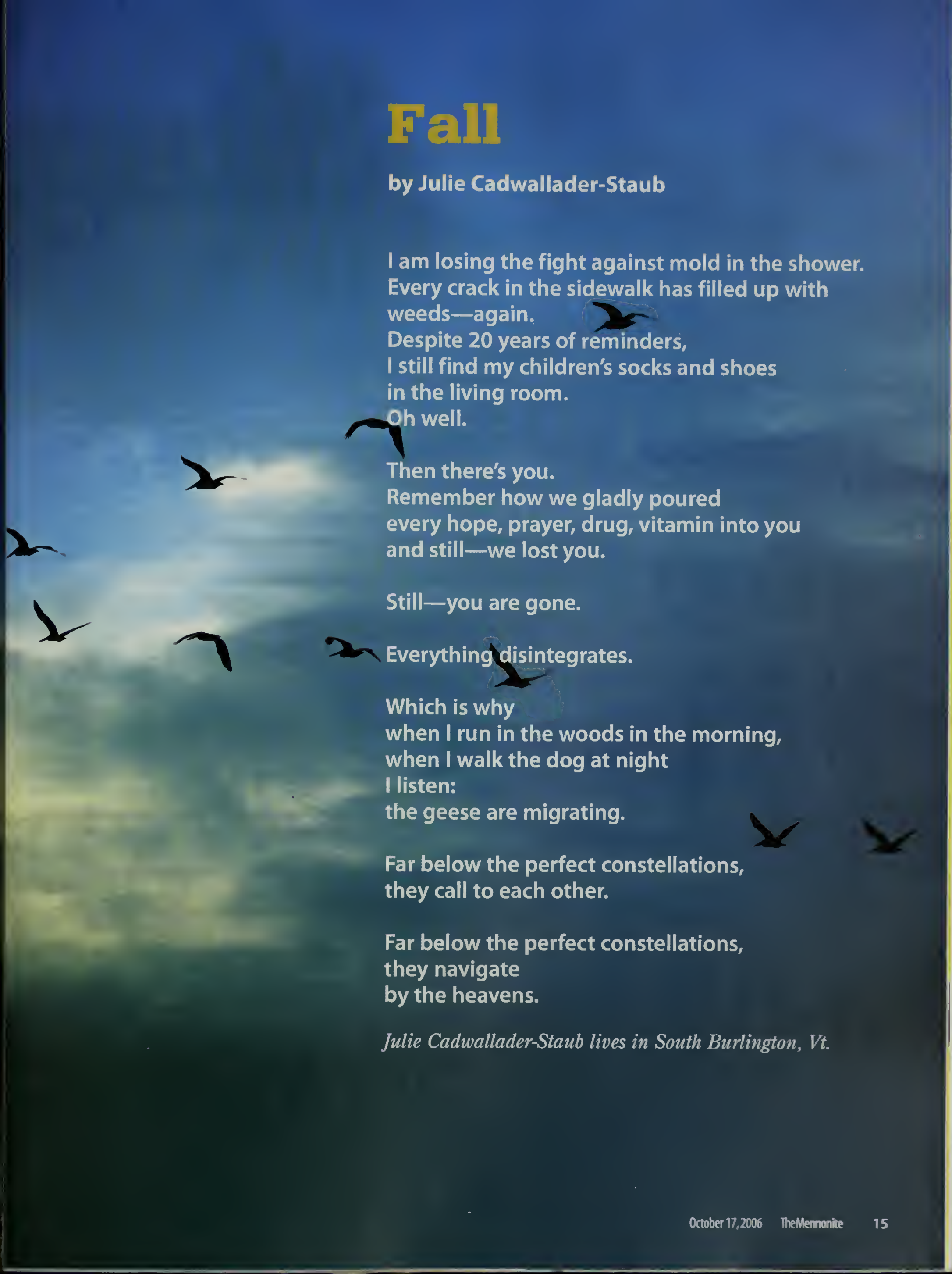
I have been forced by some circumstances to face the truth that I am human, average. I am a mixture of admirable qualities and qualities I would rather not acknowledge. I have equal potential for success and failure. When you throw everything that's true about me together, you get average. I am an average man.

God is delighted that I've finally accepted this truth. I am free from the need to hide my weaknesses. I am free from the need to compare myself to others. I am free to accept God's unconditional love that comes to me in each moment, exactly as I am—free from the crushing sense that I must be better than I am to get and keep God's approval. I am free to accept others as they are, able to affirm them in their giftedness and be gracious when their weaknesses are evident.

All in all, it is a wonderful thing, this being average. I highly recommend it. As you embrace your humanity, you will discover that Jesus, who is fully aware of all your strengths and weaknesses, is not ashamed to call you his brother or sister (Hebrews 2:11). Hallelujah.

Marlin Birkey is pastor of Ashton Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla.





Fall

by Julie Cadwallader-Staub

I am losing the fight against mold in the shower.
Every crack in the sidewalk has filled up with
weeds—again.
Despite 20 years of reminders,
I still find my children's socks and shoes
in the living room.
Oh well.

Then there's you.
Remember how we gladly poured
every hope, prayer, drug, vitamin into you
and still—we lost you.

Still—you are gone.

Everything disintegrates.

Which is why
when I run in the woods in the morning,
when I walk the dog at night
I listen:
the geese are migrating.

Far below the perfect constellations,
they call to each other.

Far below the perfect constellations,
they navigate
by the heavens.

Julie Cadwallader-Staub lives in South Burlington, Vt.

Why Mennonite pastors survive

It's a

by Robert Hartzler

The expression describes a positive experience—exciting, even exhilarating. I ride bicycle and have had some great rides: in the Rothrock Forest of central Pennsylvania, the Skyline Drive of northern Virginia, the Black Hills of South Dakota, through buffalo herds in Custer State Park, in the Sawtooth Mountains of central Idaho and around the Wind River Range of western Wyoming.

But the greatest ride of all has been four decades of ministry as a pastor in the Mennonite church. Oh, I have heard all the negative descriptions of life as a Mennonite preacher. The list gets long: discrimination against and criticism of pastors, keeping them poor and dependent, the abuse of pastor's kids by peers, unrealistic expectations, being bombarded by the crises in the congregation, a 24-hour, seven-day responsibility and the loneliness of professional confidentiality.

When God calls and gives you the vision for his work, it becomes a wonderful journey. A clear sense of the divine call will carry you through tough times.

So why do I say it's so great? *First, because of God's call.* Merely human preferences and wisdom would say, "No way." I believe one should stay out of the pastoral ministry as long as you can. But when God calls and gives you the vision for his work, it becomes a wonderful journey. A clear sense of the divine call will carry you through tough times.

Second, God promises his presence. "Where the Lord guides, he also provides" is a good reminder. The Holy Spirit goes before, beside and within the called to do God's will. I can only say this is true by personal experience. How often in 40-plus years, when I did not know what to do or say, the Spirit redeemed the moment and turned seeming defeat into quiet victory.

Third, we pastors get to share in the most significant and important events of human life on earth. We walk with our people through the various stages and crises of life in preparation for the ultimate goal of eternal life with God. You say, "What stages and crises?"

Here's my list: teaching new members; premarital preparation; visiting new parents; sitting with families during surgery; visiting the sick, aged and lonely; mentoring youth; identifying and calling candidates to ministry; performing baptisms and child dedications; sitting with the dying and their families; conducting funerals and memorial services; and many more that could be added.

We are dealing with eternal matters and destinies. Financial wizards may find reward in millions of dollars. Successful businesses can point to vital services rendered and employment for needy workers. Architects can show us skyscrapers and masterpieces of construction. I find reward in the spiritual births and growth of Christian believers. It is both encouraging and humbling to hear the gratitude of people who affirm some small helpfulness on my part sometime in the past 43 years.

That's my answer to the question of why. The next question is how.

How do Mennonite pastors survive? It is a crucial question. Forgive me for offering another list.

They survive with the help of supportive spouses. Pity the pastor whose spouse refuses to be involved. Credentialing changes things, including the spouse's position, image and reputation in the community and congregation. A supportive husband or wife is crucial to the health, well-being and stability of a pastor. Listening, evaluating, encouraging, challenging and loving provide a matrix for steady ministry.

They survive with intentional maintenance and continuing education. How can a pastor minister effectively to growing, changing people if he or she is not growing? This requires regular study, periodic rests, inspirational experiences, physical recreation, solitude and a planned course of continuing education. Without this, pathology will eventually appear. Area conferences offer resources.

Pastors survive with congregational support. Support is expressed in a negotiated contract with

great ride

clear terms. Support comes in the team of elders/deacons that stands with and beside the pastor. It comes in the comments of participants or in notes or letters. I have a file folder entitled "Good Stuff" that contains the affirmations, thank-you notes and other expressions of appreciation that came my way through the years. In moments of discouragement I have on occasion pulled out that file to cheer my wounded spirit.

They survive through collegiality. Pastors need structured peer groups from which they gain understanding, perspective, counsel and critique. Local ministerial associations, sometimes called "bitch and brag" sessions, will not provide the items listed above. Pastors are not called to be Lone Rangers. They are members of the larger body of Christ committed to "giving and receiving counsel."

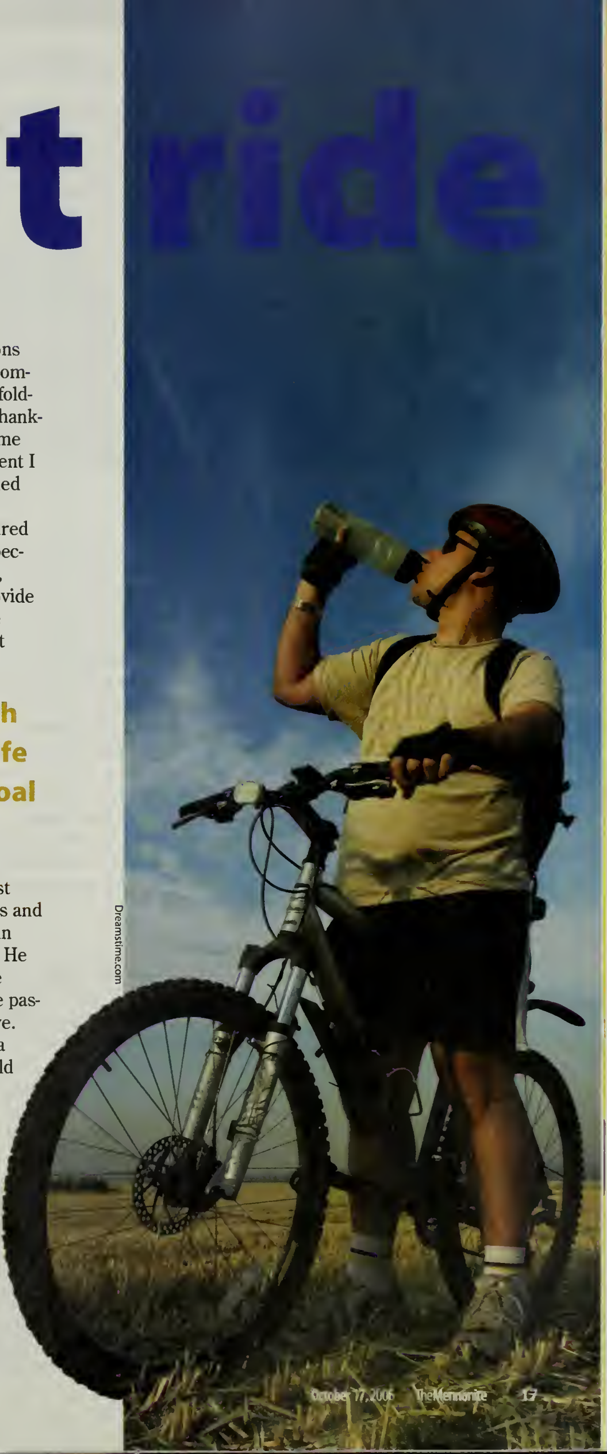
We walk with our people through the various stages and crises of life in preparation for the ultimate goal of eternal life with God.

Finally, pastors survive by the grace of God. All the best training in the world, all the greatest abilities we possess and all the finest support systems available for pastors pale in comparison to God's gracious provision in Jesus Christ. He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep. By his grace we are saved and have our ministry. That is why and how some pastors survive without all the good things mentioned above.

At three-score-and-ten I look back with joy. It's been a great ride. Would I do it again? Absolutely. I hope I would make some improvements. And I pray that many young people will hear God's call, catch the vision and get on board through the continuing efforts in the denominational "culture of call."

P.S. I believe every Mennonite minister should also have a marketable skill in addition to pastoral abilities and training. It helps avoid an unhealthy, dependent relationship between pastor and congregation. It may also buy shoes for the kids when push comes to shove.

Robert Hartzler is a retired pastor in Wayland, Iowa.



Dreamstime.com

Mennonite Macedonias

Diane Zaerr Brenneman is denominational minister for Congregational and Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

We all need encouragement to follow God's call on our lives. And we need support when we accept a call that may take us far from home. We note that fewer candidates for pastoral ministry in Mennonite Church USA are willing to serve away from home. In 2002, half our pastoral candidates were open to serve congregations wherever the need arose. In 2005, only a third were open geographically, and two-thirds limited the geographic areas in which they were willing to serve. We have a waiting list for pastorates in high-density Mennonite areas and empty pulpits in regions where Mennonite population is sparse.

God is at work in areas other than where Mennonites have clustered.

Valuing spousal careers and proximity to grandparents or aged parents are understandable needs, but some candidates include limitations such as preferred weather or proximity to cities with cultural offerings. I advise candidates to think of serving a series of pastorates—and perhaps the first one can be "away from home." During Paul's second missionary journey, he had a vision. A man of Macedonia pleaded with him saying "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16). Paul and Silas went, convinced God had called them to proclaim the good news in a new area.

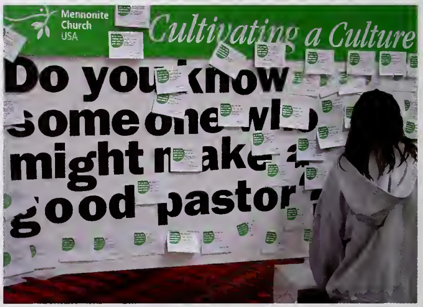
What could one learn by serving a pastorate for a season in Macedonia? That God has created beauty in all geographic areas? That we may learn to depend on God more in areas without family than with? Some surprising lessons from people who have lived out their faith in small congregations or rural areas?

Phil Rosenberger is one pastor who listened to a Macedonian call. He was born and raised in eastern Pennsylvania, where he found many opportunities for ministry as a dairy farmer, a school bus driver, a draftsman and an engineer. Phil didn't understand his call to seminary. He had "a perfect family, a perfect job and lots of opportunities to witness." But he had confidence God had a plan, and pastoring would be a wonderful experience to God's honor and glory. Conference minister Kathrine Rempel assisted God's call by telling him about a congregation of Native Americans in New Mexico. During the phone call, which he took at work, Phil had a special sense of God's calling.

He accepted a call to pastor Light of Life Mennonite Church in Farmington, N.M. He and his family left home, sold the family farm and moved across the country. While candidating, he took home a phone book and sent resumés to places that could use his skills. He now works four days a week at an engineering firm and pastors the rest of the time. His retired missionary in-laws have moved with the family, his wife grew up among Native Americans and the children have always been home-schooled.

There are Macedonias in Mennonite Church USA. There are churches in need of pastors calling, "Come and help us." Are we willing to hear?

Remember the Call Wall at Charlotte 2005? Assembly-goers posted names of people with pastoral leadership potential—180 of them (see below). If you were one of those who posted a name, have you been in touch lately with the one you "called"? Mennonite Church USA is depending on you—not only to shoulder-tap, but also to follow up in a mentoring or sponsoring role of encouragement and discernment with your nominee. During your conversations with your nominated leader, be sure to discuss serving where the needs are most pronounced and assure the candidate of your support (email, visits, phone calls, packages) wherever they accept a call.



I pray that more Mennonites hear God's call to pastoral leadership and that their mentors support and encourage them to hear the call of those underserved Mennonite congregations who, like the Macedonians, call, "Come and help us." TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The recovery of church witness**—Alan Kreider
- **The gift of congregational sharing**—June Mears Driedger

MPN sells last four Provident Bookstores

Proceeds will pay off $3.1 million debt, allow network to focus on publishing.

Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) will sell the last four stores in its Provident Bookstores chain to Berean Christian Stores, a Christian bookstore chain based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Three of the four Provident stores are in Pennsylvania: in Lancaster, New Holland and Souderton. The fourth store is in Wooster, Ohio. The sale will be effective at the end of October.

"This sale enables us to accomplish … two ends," said MPN board chair Phil Bontrager Oct. 4, "focus on our core mission of publishing resources for the Mennonite church in Canada and the United States and eliminate the existing MPN debt."

Bontrager

MPN leaders could not disclose how much they will receive for the four stores because confidentiality about the price was part of the sale agreement with Berean. But they said the proceeds will enable the binational publishing entity to eliminate more than $3.1 million in debt remaining from its financial crisis of approximately five years ago.

Last month, MPN closed the store in Ephrata, Pa., and sold its Provident Bookstore in Newton, Kan., to a group of local investors (see "Newton Bookstore Bought by Local Group," Oct. 3). The Goshen and Berne, Ind., stores were sold to local investors one year ago.

During the past four years, income from the stores helped improve MPN's financial position. According to audited financial statements released by MPN in July, Provident Bookstores sales totaled $9,370,987 during the fiscal year that ended Jan. 31.

"The stores were profitable," Bontrager said, "and they were servicing the debt, but we did not feel we had the financial capability to [both] retire the debt and invest in the stores for the future."

Because bookstore sales accounted for approximately 75 percent of total sales, MPN will be a much smaller organization after divesting itself of its bookstore division.

"We'll have to ensure that the administrative apparatus is the right size [in a smaller organization]," said MPN executive director Ron Rempel.

Rempel and Bontrager said that two positions at MPN headquarters in Scottdale, Pa., will be eliminated: one position that does payroll for the bookstores and a second position that does accounts payable for the stores.

Rempel also said the four stores sold to Berean will continue to serve their customers with a wide selection of Christian books, music and other resources. Rempel also said Berean wants Provident staff to continue working in the stores.

"Most MPN material will continue to be available through the former Provident stores and through other bookstores across the country," Rempel said. "This sale enables MPN to focus on its core mission of publishing books and resources that witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective."

Rempel

MPN is the only churchwide agency that belongs to both Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

On Sept. 25, MPN received authorization to make the sale to Berean from the Joint Executive Committee—the group that manages joint programs for the two denominations. Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board and Mennonite Church Canada's General Board ratified the decision "within days," said Bontrager.

According to MPN leaders, Berean has 17 stores located in the Midwest and western United States (Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Arizona, California). The chain has been in business for more than 70 years. The addition of the four remaining Provident stores will allow Berean Christian Stores to expand into the eastern United States, Rempel said.—*Everett J. Thomas*

This sale enables us to … focus on our core mission … and eliminate the existing MPN debt.—Phil Bontrager

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Bartel inaugurated into ‘house of God’

Bethel College’s 13th president describes school’s tradition as ‘holy space.’

Vada Snider/Bethel College

Barry Bartel, speaks at his inauguration at Bethel College. With him on the stage, from left: Greg Gaeddert, Rosalind Andreas, Howard Keim, Cynthia Jantzen, Jose Valenzuela, John McCabe-Juhnke

The “holy space” of Bethel College (named from the Hebrew Beth-El, “house of God”) was a much-invoked metaphor during the celebration that marked the inauguration of Barry C. Bartel as the college’s 13th president on Oct. 8.

Almost 120 years ago, the Mennonite founders of the North Newton, Kan., school “established this special meeting place by both defining its mission clearly in the context of the Mennonite church and, in the words of our charter, ‘opening wide the doors of the institution, so that all may have an opportunity to partake of whatsoever advantages may be offered by it,’” Bartel said in his inaugural address.

“With the foundation in Christ reflected on our seal, the founders created … this house of God, this holy space. What an incredible vision and risk, a vision and a heritage we continue to nurture in the company of this great cloud of witnesses.”

Nearly 1,000 people gathered in Memorial Hall on the Bethel campus for a worship service in the morning and inaugural ceremonies in the afternoon. Bartel’s vision of a house of God that continues to be open to the world was reflected by those who participated in the events.

Angela Opimi, whom Barry and Brenda Bartel had known as a church youth leader and a co-worker when they served with Mennonite Central Committee in Bolivia and now MCC country representative in Nicaragua, read the New Testament Scripture. Willi Hugo Pérez, president of the Seminario Latinoamericano Anabautista SEMILLA in Guatemala City, brought greetings in Spanish and English on behalf of all Mennonite institutions of higher education.

Barry and Brenda Bartel spent a total of eight years in MCC service in Haiti and Bolivia, requiring them to study several languages, including Haitian Creole, Quechua and Spanish.

“With language, as in all disciplines, we learn best when we take risks. That risk creates potential—and holy space,” Bartel said. He illustrated the point with a story about himself as a new learner of Spanish, visiting a Mennonite church in Argentina where the pastor interviewed him in front of the congregation instead of asking him to speak, as is customary. At one point, the pastor asked Bartel if he was married—in Spanish, “casado.” Bartel admitted he has trouble distinguishing between “married” and “tired” (cansado) and that he replied to Pastor Gutierrez and the whole congregation that he was “not much married.”

Bartel said he often tells this story on himself for its humor and its reminder of the importance of humility but that it also invokes a memory of a group of people who, rather than laughing at him, affirmed him for his willingness to take the risk of speaking to them. In doing so, he said, they created “holy space” for him.

In his commissioning address, former MCC director Ronald J.R. Mathies, lifted up Bartel’s “global perspective” as one of the gifts he brings to Bethel College.

“You have experienced that meeting people—really meeting people and ‘walking in their shoes’—is a profound and transformational experience,” Mathies said. “You have learned to travel not as a tourist but as a pilgrim. Pilgrims journey through life recognizing they are on holy ground, that God is already there.”—*Melanie Zuercher of Bethel College*

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Harder becomes ninth Bluffton president

Five living presidents, with 41 years of experience, part of Oct. 8 inauguration.

Sunday, Oct. 8, officially marked a new chapter in Bluffton (Ohio) University's history with the inauguration of James M. Harder as the institution's ninth president.

In front of family, faculty, staff, emeriti, students, four past Bluffton presidents and the Bluffton community seated in Founders Hall, Harder accepted the role and responsibilities that come with leading Bluffton University into the future.

"My hope is for Bluffton University to move forward in the years ahead, continuing to extend its reach in support of the purposes of God's universal kingdom," Harder said after being formally installed as president.

Morris Stutzman, chair of the board of trustees, welcomed the community and delegates from 42 colleges and universities who came to celebrate the new presidency. Stutzman was joined on the platform by Harder and Bluffton's four living past presidents: Lee Snyder (1996-2006), Elmer Neufeld (1978-96), Benjamin Sprunger (1972-77) and Robert S. Kreider (1965-1972).

After an opening prayer and hymn sing, Harder was greeted by representatives of seven Bluffton constituencies, who presented the new president with gifts. Each presenter took time to thank Harder for his time and dedication to Bluffton and to encourage him as he takes on new responsibilities and challenges.

Bluffton's seventh president, Elmer Neufeld, presented a Scripture reading of 1 Peter 4:8-11, commanding individuals to love one another, be hospitable toward one another, use one's gifts to serve others and serve one another through God's strength.

Bluffton's fifth president, Robert S. Kreider, introduced Harder and instructed those present to remember that, academics aside, Harder is an individual—a human being whose path through life had been laid specifically for the present moment—the beginning of his presidency. After the introduction, Stutzman installed Harder as the ninth president of Bluffton, placing a medallion upon Harder's neck, symbolizing the weight and responsibility of the leadership position he has been given.

During his response and inaugural address, Harder thanked those involved in the inauguration process, his peers and colleagues who work alongside him, those who came before him and, most importantly, his family for their support and love. He also thanked the past presidents on the stage behind him for their combined 41 years of service. In reflecting on Bluffton's past, Harder noted that much had changed since its founding 107 years ago as Central Mennonite College. But "one characteristic of the original Bluffton would still be recognized by our founders," he said, "and that is what is at the heart of Bluffton—engaging the lives of students and sending them into the world as transformed individuals.—*Robin Bowlus of Bluffton University*

Courtesy photo

Bluffton University's five living presidents gathered for the inauguration of Bluffton's ninth president, James M. Harder. Seated left to right are Harder and Benjamin Sprunger. Standing, left to right, are Lee Snyder, Elmer Neufeld and Robert Kreider.

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Holy Spirit conference in the Philippines

The fourth annual gathering includes unstructured 'Holy Spirit time.'

Wending two miles along the narrow stone streets of Lumban in the Philippines. 45 international guests from Mennonite churches in 16 countries waved country flags and colored balloons as they trekked from the mayor's office to the Lumban Mennonite Bible Church.

Philippine friends welcomed the group to the fourth annual Holy Spirit in Mission Conference, held Sept. 7-10 in Lumban, with orchid garlands and children's songs and dances as they entered the newly completed four-story church building that serves as a church conference center.

The Integrated Mennonite Churches of the Philippines (IMC) and the International Missions Association (IMA) served as hosts. IMA is an association of Anabaptist mission bodies established for prayer, mutual support and partnering in carrying out the Great Commission.

Held in conjunction with the annual IMA business meeting, the Holy Spirit in Mission Conference equips the international church with a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit, said planners, to bring new vision and release gifts of ministry to build up the mission of the church.

IMA president Richard Showalter introduced the conference theme: "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." He noted that the Greek word "testimony" is the same word from which English "martyr" comes and is one of the most frequently used words of the New Testament.

"It speaks of a powerful, external truth—and not just our own best ideas," he said.

During the three-day conference, more than 40 Filipino leaders joined the internationals for times of prayer and fasting, testimonies, reports, teachings, workshops and unstructured "Holy Spirit time" at the Pagsanjan Rapids Hotel.

On the first day, Erlinda Veluz, a Filipino woman, delivered a challenge to the group.

"There are no restrictions," Veluz said. "God is not calling only the educated. Enroll in the 'University of the Holy Spirit' for his teaching and empowerment!"

Testimonies from participants emphasized the importance of walking in the Spirit. Mulugeta Zewdie, general secretary of Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, had experienced revival as a high school youth.

"Sometimes the Holy Spirit and our knowledge clash," Zewdie said. "Prayer brings the power of God to the nations."

On two consecutive evenings, several hundred met downtown in a public stadium for open-air meetings. Henry Mulandi, director of African Christian Mission International in Kenya, issued a call for salvation, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and missions. Melvin Fernandez of the Honduran Mennonite Church and Ryan Showalter, director of Discipleship Ministries for Eastern Mennonite Missions, led a special rally for children and youth.

The conference concluded with a challenge from Lawrence Chiles, bishop of an Anabaptist circle of churches in the eastern United States.

"As we empty ourselves as Jesus did," Chiles said, "God will enlarge our tents, lengthen our cords. It's amazing to hear how the Ethiopians are reaching the Somalis, the Kenyans the Sudanese. No one country is the whole cord, but the IMA links cords together to take the gospel around the world."—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

MCC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Director, Human Resources
Director, Resource Generation Network

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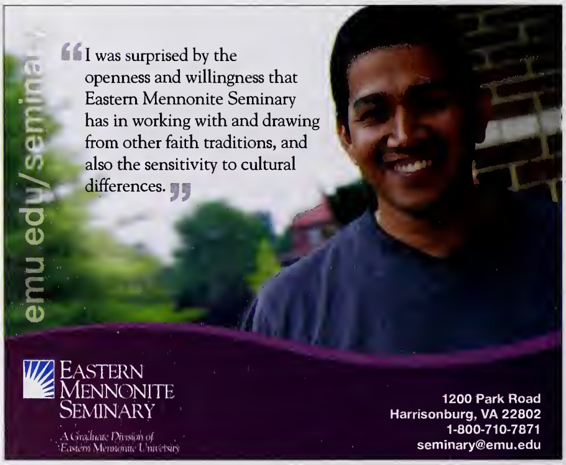
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Iranian president meets church leaders

MCC hosts meeting with Ahmadinejad during his visit to the United Nations.

Religious leaders from Christian and Muslim faith backgrounds met with the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Sept. 20 in New York City in a discussion about the role religious communities can play in reversing the deepening crisis between Iran and the United States. The event was organized and sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

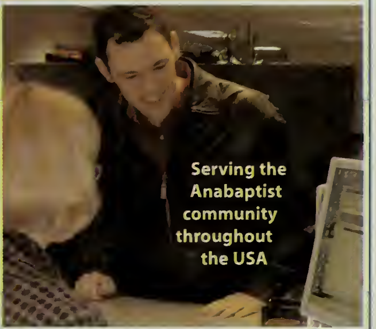
"This [was] an opportunity to build mutual understanding between two peoples who have lived too long with mutual suspicion," said Robb Davis, MCC executive director.

Davis and Ahmadinejad opened the meeting with comments about their respective faith positions. Davis focused on the need of religious leaders in the United States and Iran to pursue peace and encourage those in government to resolve differences peacefully.

Davis asked about the language being used by the United States and Iran, such as President Bush referring to Iran as one of the "Axis of Evil" countries, while Iranian protesters march through the streets shouting, "Death to America."

Ahmadinejad said that "Death to America" does not mean death to the American people, that in fact Iranians love the American people. What it pointed to, he said, were problems with U.S. government policy that has negatively impacted the recent history of Iran, from the Shah to the current crisis.

Ahmadinejad said he welcomed the group's prayers.—*Mark Beach of Mennonite Central Committee*



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CALENDAR

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society will hold a ***tour of southern Lancaster County*** (Conestoga area) on Oct. 21. Transportation and admissions are covered in the tour price.

Donald B. Kraybill will present ***"The Riddle of Amish Culture"*** on Oct. 10, ***"From the Buggy to the Byte: How the Amish Tame Technology"*** on Oct. 17, ***"From Plows to Profits: The Rise of Amish Business"*** on Oct. 24 and ***"Bush Fever: The Amish and the 2004 Election"*** on Oct. 31. All talks begin at 8 p.m. in the **Young Center, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College,** and are open to the public free of charge.

Piet Visser, professor of Anabaptist-Mennonite history at the **Mennonite Seminary,** Vrije University, Amsterdam, will visit Lancaster (Pa.) County from the Netherlands for an illustrated lecture entitled, ***"Amsterdam Mennonites in the Light and Shadow of Rembrandt: New Findings on their Mutual Relations,"*** on Oct. 24, at a 6 p.m. dinner banquet. Call 717-393-9745 for reservation information.

Camp Koinonia, Boissevain, will host its second annual ***Quilting Retreat*** Nov. 3-5 weekend; Nov. 10-12, the scrapbookers will meet. **Camp Moose Lake** in southeastern Manitoba will have quilting retreats Nov. 3-5 and Nov. 10-12, and a scrapbooking retreat October 27-29. For details see the Web site at www.campswithmeaning.org.

Adriel is hosting its ***24th annual quilt auction*** on Saturday, Oct. 21 at 10 a.m. on their West Liberty, Ohio, campus. There will be several quilts, wall hangings and other handcrafted items auctioned, many made by Mennonite and Amish. A pancake and sausage breakfast will be served at 8 a.m. All quilts up for auction may be viewed on Adriel's Web site www.adriel.org/quiltpreview .

Kathy Galloway, Leader of the Iona Community in Scotland, will be the guest of **Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Gainesville Florida** for a ***weekend of meetings*** Oct. 14 and 15. She will speak 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct 14, at the Quaker Meeting House on "Hope in a Time of War" and will preach at a joint Mennonite-Presbyterian worship service at Westminster Presbyterian Church 9:30 a.m. Sunday. For more information, please call Emmanuel Mennonite Church at 352-377-6577.

WORKERS

Hartford, Tyler, was licensed as associate pastor at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Aug. 6.

Hostetler, Darrel, ended 37 years as minister of music at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Aug. 31.

Gingerich, Matthew, was commissioned as youth pastor at Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind., on Sept. 3.

Jacobs, Rachel Miller, was ordained as pastor at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind., on Aug. 20.

Kuyten, Rudolf (Rudy), was licensed for specific ministry as pastor at Maple River Mennonite, Brutus, Mich., on July 9.

Leichty, Paul, ended his assignment as associate pastor of music at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind., on Aug. 31.

MuMaw, Jeff, was licensed as associate pastor at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen. Ind., on July 30.

Nussbaum, Scott, ended his assignment as youth pastor at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on June 11.

Riddle, Chris, was licensed toward ordination at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church, on Sept. 25. The Riddle family will be serving in Bari, Italy, with Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions.

Rohrer, Sarah, was licensed as youth pastor at Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind., on Aug. 27.

Villegas, Isaac, was licensed toward ordination as pastor at Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, Durham, N.C., on Sept. 24.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bohnert, Paxton Charles, July 13, to Allen and Melanie Mishler Bohnert, Columbus, Ohio.

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Dunckel, Lis Fern, Aug. 23, to Thomas and Leann Lyndaker Dunckel, Lowville, N.Y.

Friesen, Greta Miriam, June 6, to Dr. Bradley and Elizabeth Emery Friesen, Lincoln, Vt.

Graber-Nofziger, Ivan Lee, April 7, to Jon Nofziger and Katie Graber, Columbus, Ohio.

Halloran, Django Louis, Sept. 16, to Tommy and Lauren Gray Halloran, St. Louis, Mo.

Harder-Krehbiel, Ari Ann, Sept. 19, received for adoption Sept. 19, by Matthew Krehbiel and Katherine Harder, Manhattan, Kan.

Miller, Greta Faith, Aug. 20, to Ryan and Lisa Miller Miller, Goshen, Ind.

O'Keefe, Kinsey Emma, Sept. 9, to Mike and Kim King O'Keefe, Kouts, Ind.

Roggie, Anna Marie, Aug. 24, to Jason and Amanda Zehr Roggie, Croghan, N.Y.

Schrock, Kason Kevin Lee, Sept. 20, to Kevin and Maree Gerig Schrock, Shipshewana, Ind.

Simones, Wyatt Allen, Aug. 9, to Joe and Heidi Sommer Simones, St. Louis, Mo.

Wyse, Henry Hochstetler, Aug. 12, to Doug and Heidi Hochstetler Wyse, Columbus, Ohio.

MARRIAGES

Barth/Ressler: Sarah Barth, Mishawaka, Ind., and Derek Ressler, South Bend, Ind., Sept. 23 at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend.

Birchenough/Mayer: Drue Birchenough, Lowville, N.Y., and Fawn Mayer, Lowville, July 22 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Birky/Szarley: Sarah Birky, Kouts, Ind., and Jeffrey Szarley, Hobart, Ind., Sept. 16 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts.

Brush/Unrau: Rachel Brush, Owasso, Okla., and Jerrod "Hubby" Unrau, Inola, Okla., Sept. 23 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola.

Gnagey/Huston: Merridy Gnagey, Philadelphia, Pa., and Scott Huston, Philadelphia, Aug. 5 in Harrisonburg, Va.

Houser/Roes: Bonnie Houser, Glenfield, N.Y., and Duston Roes, Lowville, N.Y., Sept. 23 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Hurst/Martin: Chad Hurst, Lititz, Pa., and Nicole Martin, New Holland, Pa., Aug. 12 in Lititz, Pa.

Jacob/Sowles: Jessica Jacob, Kouts, Ind., and Justin Sowles, Kouts, Aug. 19 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts.

Kniss/Stutzman: Andrea Kniss, Harrisonburg, Va., and Ben Stutzman, Harrisonburg, Sept. 16 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Mai/Stutzman: Hai En Mai, Seattle, Wash., and Julianne Stutzman, Mertztown, Pa., Sept. 9 at Hunsicker's Grove, Mertztown.

Miller/Salter: Kevin Miller, Columbus, Ohio, and Leigh Salter, Columbus, Aug. 12 at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Pellitier/Roggie: Amy Pellitier, Madawaska, Maine, and Shawn Roggie, Lowville, N.Y., Aug. 28 at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Madawaska, Maine.

Reist/Wenger: Emelene Reist, Leola, Pa., and Dustin Wenger, Ephrata, Pa., Sept. 23 at Old Leacock Presbyterian Church, Intercourse, Pa.

DEATHS

Becker, Lizzie Unruh Koehn, 93, Aberdeen, Idaho, died Sept. 1. Spouse: David D. Becker (deceased). Parents: Cornelius and Katie Koehn Unruh. Children: Edith Isaak, Milton, Donald; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 5 at First Mennonite Church, Aberdeen.

Buckwalter, Leon, 82, Lancaster, Pa., died Sept. 17. Spouse: Miriam E. Bair Buckwalter. Parents: Freeland N. and Florence Huber Buckwalter. Children: L. Herbert, Fredric, Dana, Lori Klassen; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 22 at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA.

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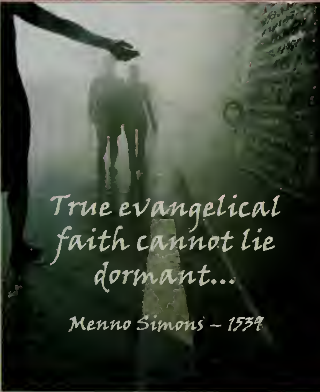

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Christner, Willis, 83, Glendale, Ariz., died Sept. 7. Spouse: Anna Beachy Christner. Parents: Noah and Martha Yoder Christner. Children: Rich, Jim, Mary Headings, Ted Thomas (deceased); 14 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 14 at Glencroft Chapel, Glendale.

Cooprider, Donald E., 80, Hesston, Kan., died Sept. 18. Spouse: Lena Slagell Cooprider (deceased). Parents: Irl and Lizzie Zimmerman Cooprider. Children: Claudia Nathe, Philip, Catherine Ediger; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 22 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Enns, Abe, 91, Inman, Kan., died Sept. 17. Spouse: Linda T. Enns (deceased). Parents: John P. and Anna F. Friesen Enns. Children: Doris Enns. Funeral: Sept. 22 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Franz, Eunice Schmidt, 81, Inman, Kan., died Sept. 22. Spouse: John Calvin Franz (deceased). Parents: Frank J. and Bertha Unrau Schmidt. Children: Orlin "Chuck" Franz, Lynette Brown, Denise Troxel, Kirsten Franz; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 26 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Hackman, Stanley A., 90, Harleysville, Pa., died Sept. 26. Spouse: Pearl Ziegler Hackman (deceased); Spouse: Shirley Bergey Hackman. Parents: Wilson and Lizzie Alderfer Hackman. Children: Shirley Glantz, Betty Roberts; nine grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; six great-great grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 30 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Harder, Olga Peters, 90, St. James, Minn., died Sept. 26. Spouse: Peter M. Harder (deceased). Parents: Herman P. and Elizabeth Baer Peters. Funeral: Sept. 29 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Jantz, Wesley E., 92, Hesston, Kan. Spouse: Phyllis Weaver Jantz. Parents: Solomon and Katie Wadel Jantz. Children: Melinda Gerlofs, David, Marilyn Vidakovich, Wayne; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 17 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Kaufmann, William (Bill), 90, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 13. Spouse: Ruth Birky Kaufmann. Parents: Henry J. and Katherine Ringenberg Kaufmann. Children: Beth Schlabach, Alice Slabach, Karen Keiper, Elaine Martin, William Jr., Eric; 13 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 16 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Krehbiel, Sarah Carr, 81, Newton, Kan., died Sept. 26. Spouse: Arthur Krehbiel (deceased). Parents: D.P. and Imogene Williams Carr. Children: Karen Carter; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 29 at Halstead Cemetery, Halstead, Kan.

Lantz, Maude Elizabeth Geil, 88, Broadway, Va., died Sept. 22. Spouse: John Lantz (deceased). Parents: N. Wilmer and Mary Catherine Geil. Children: John David, Miriam Hall, Becky Vanhook, June Lantz, Ruth Ann Dixon, Joyce Wenger, Emily Lantz, Stephen; 12 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 25 at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway.

Miller, Alice Schrock, 79, Lexington, Ill., died Sept. 4 of a stroke. Spouse: Vernon Miller. Parents: Samuel and Martha Lehman Schrock. Children: Beverly Olson, Jack; six grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa, Ill.

Moser, E.A. (Lee), 91, Wooster, Ohio, died Aug. 8. Spouse: Frances Zuercher Moser. Parents: Daniel B. and Anna Naftziger Moser. Children: Janice Moser, Jim. Funeral: Aug. 12 at Wooster Mennonite Church.

Rutschman, Harriet Fischbach, 82, North Newton, Kan., died Sept. 7. Spouse: Laverne Rutschman. Parents: Carl and Luella Fischbach. Children: David, Robert, Thomas, Ruth Holliday, Richard; 17 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Shelly, Lydiamarie, 93, Minneapolis, Minn., died Sept. 19. Spouse: Ward W. Shelly (deceased). Child: Tom; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 23 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington, Ill.

Shetler, Marlin R., 70, Davidsville, Pa., died unexpectedly Sept. 8. Spouse: Marlene Rychener Shetler. Parents: Delmar and Elnora Gindlesperger Shetler. Children: Michael, Steven, Bradley, Marla Hoober; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 12 at Carpenter Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa.

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Slabach, Rev. Albert C., 78, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Sept. 25. Spouse: Rebecca Byler Slabach. Parents: Crist and Mary Miller Slabach. Child: Gloria Mullet; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral Sept. 29 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church.

Swope, Paul Showalter, 101, North Lima, Ohio, died Sept. 15. Spouse: Lois Lavina McFerren (deceased). Parents: Emanuel J. and Maggie F. Burkholder Swope. Children: Verna Kerns, Ruth Ann Jantzi, Donald; seven grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 19 at North Lima Mennonite Church.

West, Clarence Harry, 95, Hubbard, Ore., died Sept. 13. Spouse: Berdena Mae Miller West (deceased). Parents: Harry and Anna Stauffer West. Children: Bob, Marilyn VanPelt; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 30 at Zion Mennonite, Hubbard.

Wikerd, Loretta Mae Hufford, 86, Hamburg, Pa., died Aug. 6. Spouse: Rev. Paul H. Wikerd. Parents: Jacob B. and Estella Witwer Hufford. Children: Carol, Paul Jr. (deceased), Dennis, Janice Hoffman; six grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 10 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Zehr, Clara Marie Moser, 76, Lowville, N.Y., died May 7. Spouse: Llewellyn Perry Zehr. Parents: John B. and Mary Yousey Moser. Children: John, Wendall, James, Ronald, Dennis, Darlene Rexford; 18 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 11 ay Lowville Mennonite Church.

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation filed Oct. 1, 2006, for *The Mennonite*, publication no. 17-2340, published twice-per-month (24 issues in preceding 12 months) at 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, Elkhart County, IN 46526. Phone 574-535-6051. Annual subscription price, $41.95. Publisher, The Mennonite Magazine Board; editor, Everett J. Thomas, at above office address. Owned and published by The Mennonite, Inc., Goshen, Ind. (above mailing address), a church-related nonprofit organization, tax exempt under code section 501(c)(3). Stockholders owning 1 percent or more of total stock, none. (No stock issued.) Known bondholders, etc., none. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months.

Extent and Nature of Circulation: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: A. Total number of copies: 11,885. B. Avg. paid and/or requested circulation: (1) Avg. paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541: 10,466. (2) Paid in-county subscriptions: 1,170. C. Avg. total paid and/or requested circulation: 11,636. G. Avg. total distribution: 11,636. H. Copies not distributed: 249. I. Avg. total copies: 11,885. J. Avg. percent paid and/or requested circulation: 100.

No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: A: 15,500. B. Paid and/or requested circulation: (1) Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541: 10,062. C. Total paid and/or requested circulation: 11,232. F. Total free distribution: 4,000. G. Total distribution: 15,234. H. Copies not distributed: 266. I. Total copies: 15,500. J. Percent paid and/or requested circulation: 74.7.

I certify that all information furnished in this is true and complete.
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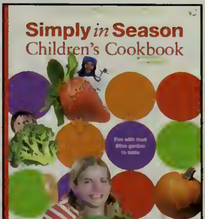

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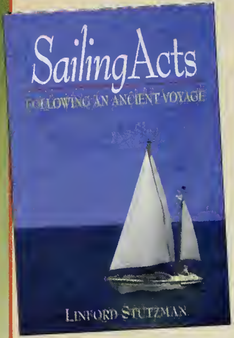
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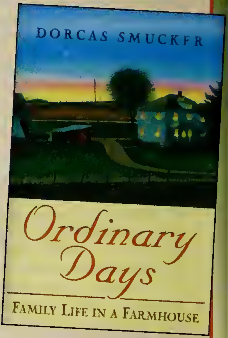
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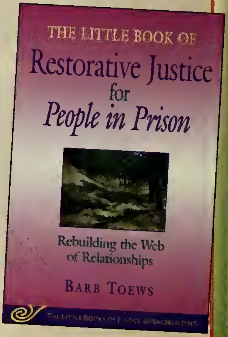
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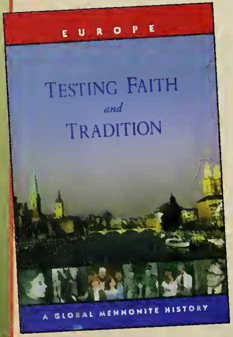
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Philadelphia Mennonite High School, a dynamic and innovative urban high school, is in the search process for an ***assistant principal***. Candidates with a vibrant Christian faith and teaching and/or administrative experience are encouraged to apply. Please direct inquiries/resumé to Dr. Barbara Moses, Principal, 860 N. 24th St., Philadelphia, PA 19130, phone 215-769-5363; fax 215-769-4063; email mos147@comcast.net.

Schowalter Villa, a Continuing Care Retirement Community, seeks a ***full-time chaplain***. Candidate will develop relationships with residents and staff and lovingly tend to the community's spiritual formation. Position open until filled. Prefer early December start date. For more information contact Lillian Claassen at lillianc@schowalter-villa.org or call 620-327-3400.

West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship is a creative urban Anabaptist community seeking a ***full-time pastor***. We are a 20-year-old congregation with an average attendance of 80 consisting primarily of young adults and families. Members are active in leading worship, preaching and all aspects of church ministries. For more information about the church go to www.wpmf.com; for more information about the pastor position contact Drick Boyd 610-341-4360.

Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church is seeking two pastors to provide leadership for its two worshiping fellowships. ***Lead pastor of Sanctuary Fellowship*** should have strong preaching gifts and experience with a multistaff congregation (or similar). ***Lead pastor for Praise Fellowship*** should have vision/experience in a more expressive, contemporary worship setting. These two pastors will join with the church administrator to form a leadership team for HMC. HMC is a large, multistaff congregation, with a strong commitment to worship, outreach, service and missions. Contact Frederic Miller at fmiller@hmcchurch.org or 540-434-4463 for initial information. Visit www.hmcchurch.org for more detail.

English conversation teachers needed! **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more nformation.

Seattle Mennonite Church (SMC) is seeking a compassionate leader to serve in its new, full-time position of ***community minister***. This person would continue the development and administration of SMC's ministry to the homeless community in its neighborhood, serving as a member of the ministerial team and work in collaboration with the current task force. Experience and/or training in urban outreach, particularly with homeless populations, preferred. If interested, please contact Karen Solberg at 206-361-4630 or email at kmpatterson@netsmc.net. Please respond by Oct. 15.

Sharon Mennonite Church, a congregation of 260 in rural central Ohio near Columbus, invites applications for the position of ***full-time youth pastor***. Individual should have a zeal for Christ and passion for youth. Will give oversight primarily to the senior MYF and junior MYF, but also leadership to young adult ministries. Congregational information available upon request. Contact chair of search committee Glenn Hochstetler at 7675 Amity Pike, Plain City, OH 43064 or email sharonmenno@yahoo.com.

Coaldale Mennonite Church is seeking to hire a ***full-time senior pastor*** to provide leadership to a pastoral team and a multigenerational membership of 300. The successful candidate will be committed to Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, have leadership experience, will be gifted in preaching, teaching and visitation. Preferred starting date March 1, 2007. Please respond by Nov. 17 to Search Committee, phone 403-345-6728 or fax 403-345-6758.

Director of libraries. Provide leadership and coordination in planning, budgeting, organizing and staffing the library. MLS required. A graduate degree in another discipline desired, with a preference for studies in theology. Knowledge of Anabaptist Mennonite theology, history and scholarship desirable. EMU seeks people who are supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices. Candidates should submit a letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Provost, **Eastern Mennonite University**, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email to provost@emu.edu. Position open July 1, 2007. Those who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

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Love and suspicion in a time of war

Gordon Houser

For any of us who forget we live in a country at war comes the documentary *The War Tapes*, which brings the Iraq War to our eyes and ears from the perspective of U.S. soldiers.

Three National Guardsmen from New Hampshire, shipped from Fort Dix to Iraq in November 2004, agreed to document their yearlong tour with digital minicams. Director Deborah Scranton then created this film from what they shot.

The three guardsmen are Sgt. Stephen Pink, a carpenter who joined the Guard to pay for college; Spec. Mike Moriarty, a mechanic who signed up in response to 9/11; and Sgt. Zack Bazzi, a Lebanese American who grew up in the States and is fluent in Arabic.

This film serves as an antidote both to those who promote the war and tend to romanticize soldiers and those who oppose the war and feel little sympathy for soldiers.

It made me think of my brother Don, who spent a year as a soldier in Vietnam. He told me that while he was there he generally experienced either boredom or terror. That seemed to be the case for these soldiers as well.

Soon after they arrive, they are in their barracks at night while IEDs (improvised explosive devices) go off around them. At any moment, one could hit their building and kill them.

One of their main tasks is protecting the civilian contractor KBR, Inc., a subsidiary of Halliburton. More than one soldier expresses disdain for the naked greed of "Dick Cheney's company."

The film includes interviews with loved ones back home (a girlfriend, a wife, a mother), who mainly want their partner or son safe at home. They don't understand why these men signed up, and the women are left to carry on with their responsibilities without the help they had before.

The War Tapes puts us in touch with the chaos and craziness of war. Bazzi is told to use his Arabic to tell civilians they cannot cross a road, even when they must to find medical help. He finds the command so stupid that he eventually refuses to talk to the civilians. He won't be a part of it.

Humans are complex and defy our easy categorization. At another point Bazzi says, "A good American will always love his country and be suspicious of his government." Perhaps the most critical of the war among the three, he later signs up for another tour because he loves being a soldier.

The film also covers the men's return to their homes. It is only momentarily happy. All likely suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, but none of them agrees to treatment.

Moriarty lives with the image of an Iraqi woman who is run over by a military truck as she crosses a road. He tells his wife, "You don't understand what I went through." She says, "No, and you don't understand what I went through."

Back home, Pink tells the camera, "This war is not about democracy" but about American companies making piles of money off him and his buddies' efforts. "This had better be about money and oil," he says, "and I want some. I'm tired of Dick Cheney getting all of it."

Meanwhile, the classified National Intelligence Estimate attributes a more direct role to the Iraq war in fueling radicalism than that presented either in recent White House documents or in a report released Sept. 20 by the House Intelligence Committee. And a poll of Iraqis in Baghdad shows that 75 percent want U.S. troops out now.

We live in wartime, and that war destroys many lives in many ways. Understanding that more clearly perhaps helps us discern just how to respond to the complexity of lives affected by that war and how to show Christ's love. TM

FILMS

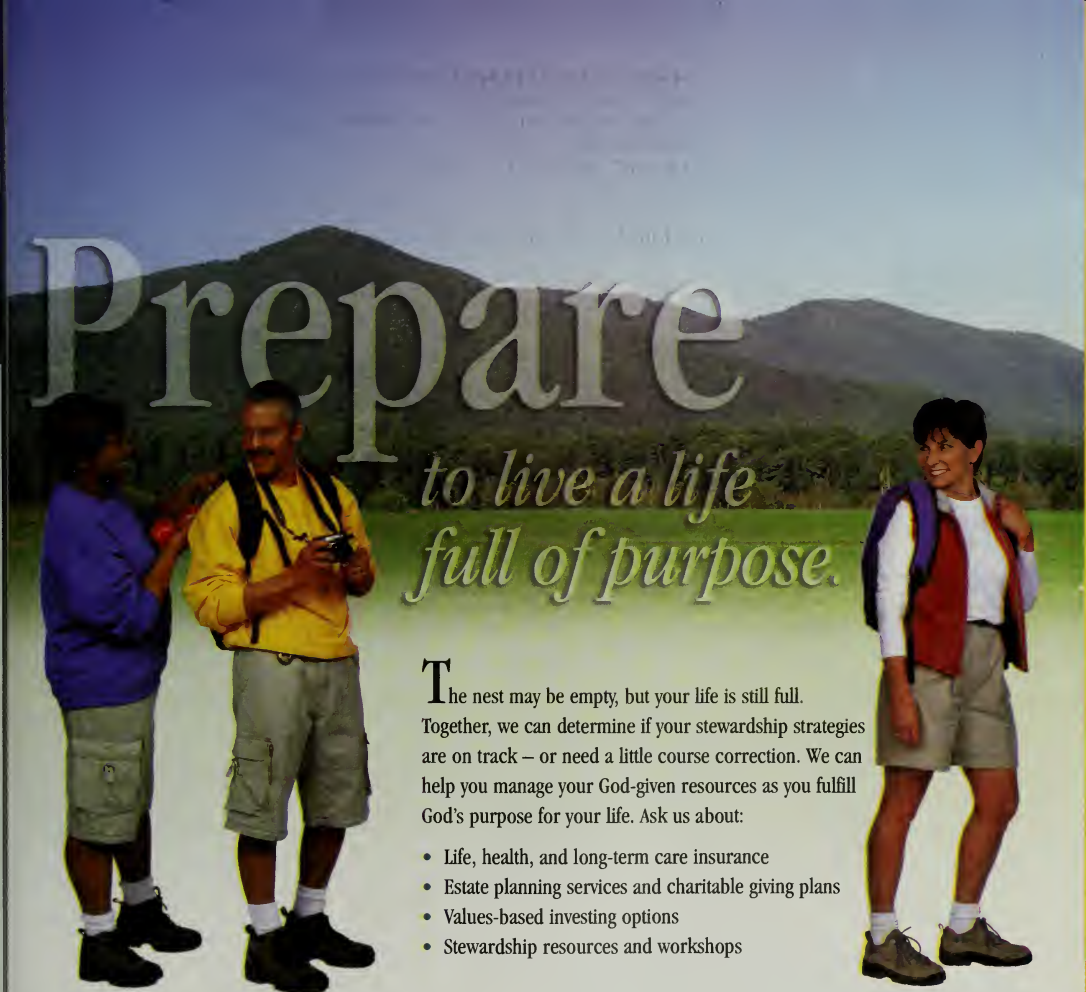
Who Killed the Electric Car? (PG) is a documentary that looks at the emergence and rapid disappearance of the electric car in the late 1990s. It shows the political games played by car companies, government groups and the oil industry, all in the name of profit and careless about what's best for our planet. Set up as a kind of trial, the film finds each entity guilty to some degree of the crime in the title, including consumers, who make demands that harm our environment. The only ones not guilty are those developing batteries, which continue to improve.

All the King's Men (PG-13) is based on Robert Penn Warren's great novel about Willie Stark, a character based on Huey P. Long, a Depression-era Louisianan who served as governor and later as senator and who championed the poor and railed against the rich. Despite Sean Penn's excellent performance and some artistic elements that perhaps draw too much attention to themselves, the movie fails to connect emotionally. It also fails to make the story coherent. Too bad, since a film about political corruption is certainly relevant.

BOOKS

Becoming Who You Are: Insights on the True Self from Thomas Merton and Other Saints by James Martin (Paulist Press, 2006, $8.95) draws on the life and writings of Merton, Henri Nouwen and others, as well as Martin's own experience to show the importance of living an authentic life. The writing is accessible, using stories to illustrate his insights. It's less a how-to book than a model for readers to discover their own way.

The Next Generation: Contemporary Expressions of Faith by Patricia C. Pongracz and Wayne Roosa (Eerdmans, 2005, $60) is a beautiful, oversized book that features the work of 44 artists "actively investigating Judeo-Christian themes within the terms of contemporary art." Roosa's long essay, "Dancing in the Dark, Waltzing in the Wonder: Contemporary Art About Faith," offers a helpful reflection on "the symbiotic dynamic between art and Christian faith." Each artist gets a spread that includes one of their works and their comments on that work. Christian art (not kitsch) is alive and well, as this book attests.



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Everett J. Thomas

Jesus was no zealot

News stories about the war in Iraq usually include phrases such as "sectarian violence" and "religious fanatics." But such fanaticism is found not only among the Shiite and Sunni Muslims locked in a civil war in the Middle East. It also lives among us. Radical beliefs are characteristic of some U.S. Christians on both the theological right and left—although they don't murder innocent people with car bombs.

I occasionally experience a similar radicalism from those who want the Mennonite church to become more open and inclusive in its teachings. I also experience it from those who want the church to be more clear about traditional beliefs and put impenetrable boundaries around those beliefs. There is as much rigid extremism among some who work for justice and peace as there is among some who want the church to focus solely on evangelism and downplay our peace church tradition.

But just as Jesus rejected the Zealots in his day, we do well to reject religious zealotry today.

Just as Jesus rejected the Zealots in his day, we do well to reject similar zealotry we see among some Christians today.

The central issue for Israel in Jesus' day was Roman occupation and how his followers should respond to it. One political party—the Sadducees—favored accommodation to the ruling powers. At the other end of the political and theological spectrum were the Zealots.

"Zealots were a Jewish sect noted for its uncompromising opposition to pagan Rome and the polytheism it professed," says *Encyclopedia Britannica.* 'The Zealots were an aggressive political party whose concern for the national and religious life of the Jewish people led them to despise even Jews who sought peace and conciliation with the Roman authorities. … Extremists among the Zealots turned to terrorism and assassination and became known as Sicarii ('dagger men'). They frequented public places with hidden daggers to strike down people friendly to Rome."

Religious fanaticism has been around a long time, and we may be tempted toward the same extremism if we try to apply our convictions to the moral and religious life of our country. But if we acknowledge this temptation in ourselves, we may be able to understand the extremism that drives other religious people to acts of violence.

Jesus' response to the zealotry of his day can be a model for us. He did not join in this fanaticism; neither did he condemn those who had fallen victim to it. Rather, Jesus offered an alternative kingdom: one that is understood best by reading the Sermon on Mount.

When we are confronted by religious fanaticism in our communities and among our neighbors, we can respond similarly—especially during this election season. We can offer a loving and calm zeal when confronted by such extremism. This is being as Christ to our neighbors.—*ejt*

Note: The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated Nov. 7, 2006.

A new office in the East

The Mennonite now has offices in three locations across Mennonite Church USA: Newton, Kan., Goshen, Ind., and Harrisonburg, Va. (see addresses on page 2). Assistant editor Anna Groff moved to Harrisonburg in September and established an office in the building housing Mennonite Media.

Given Anna's assignment to develop the "digital side" of this magazine (see News Digest, June 6), rubbing elbows with those in the church who concentrate most directly on electronic media will be helpful for the new products Anna is creating.

We have also wanted an office in the East in order to be closer to the many things that happen in this region of the country. With Anna's presence in Virginia, we anticipate that she will be able to cover some events among the churches in eastern states. The Nov. 7 issue will include the first such story; it is about Mennonite young adult involvement in the Union Project, a community development effort in Pittsburgh.—*Editor*

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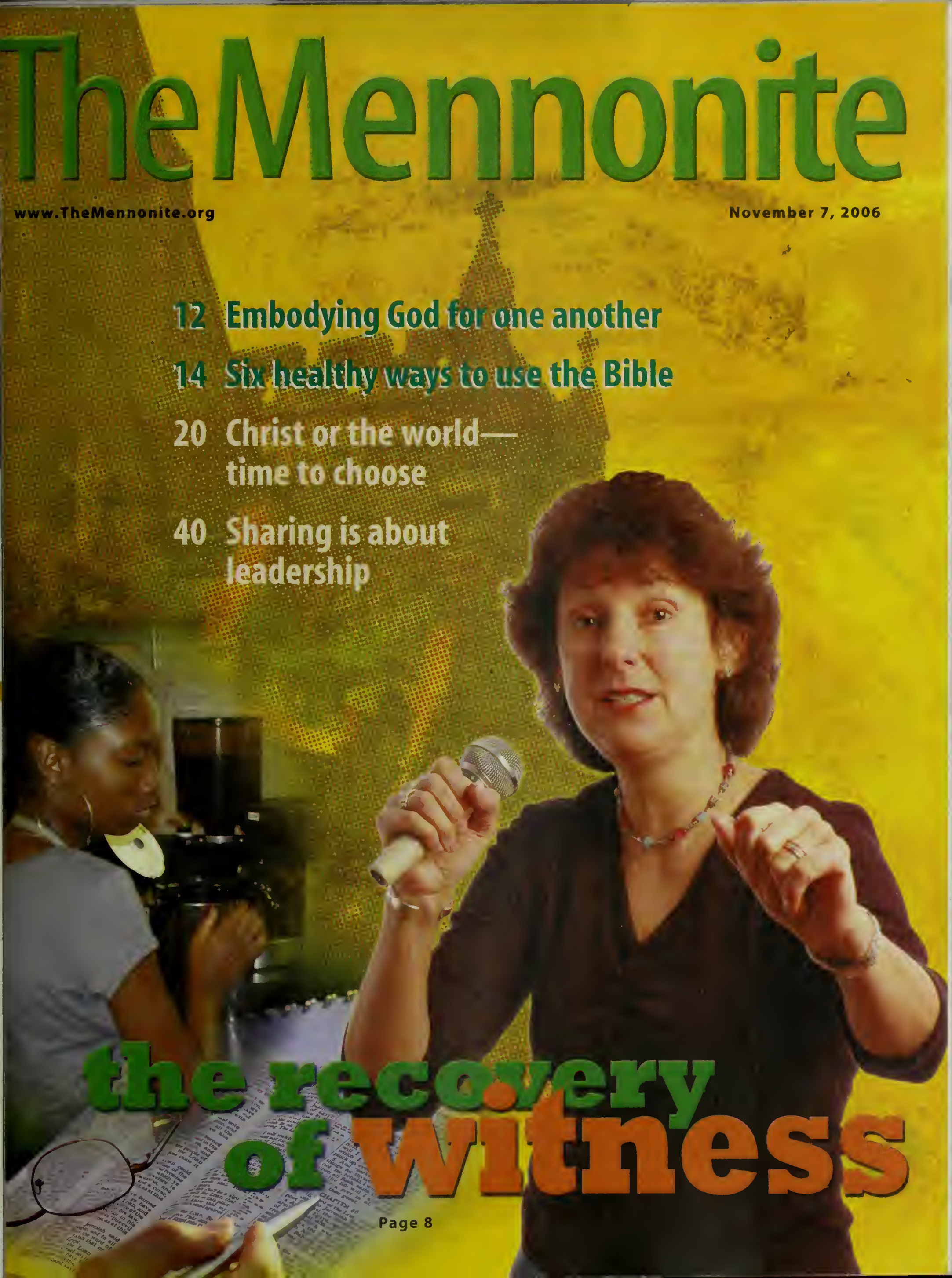
November 7, 2006



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time to choose

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leadership

the recovery of witness

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Sloth: chronic care-lessness

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Sloth, the fourth of the seven deadly sins, may hardly seem a sin. And if it is, who among us is guilty of it? Many of us work 50, 60 or more hours a week. The sin for Americans may be endless work and frenetic activity. But it's possible to be busy and lazy at the same time.

Vocational sloth—too lazy to work: The apostle Paul exhorted new Christians in Thessalonica to get to work and provide for themselves rather than living off the generosity of the church. His pointed word was, "Anyone who is unwilling to work shall not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10 TNIV).

For better or worse, I used this instruction in the raising of our four children. "No work; no eat. Supper will be available when you have completed picking up the toys in your room."

Most of us probably learned from childhood on to work hard. We work too hard. Our laziness is more visible in not ordering our work well enough to prepare for a weekly holy day of rest and worship. My working definition of sloth is the unwillingness to do what we know would be good for ourselves, others and the kingdom of God.

Relational sloth—too lazy to love: Relationships with others require careful and deliberate attention. Too many marriages fail because either the husband or wife or both are too lazy to do the hard work of love. Couples in difficulty often claim the feelings of love have left them, and there is nothing they can do about it.

The Bible describes love as an act of the will. Jesus taught, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Love is a command, an action. What are five loving actions that you will do today to demonstrate love to your husband or wife, parent or child? Feelings of love follow actions of love. Lazy lovers wait to be motivated by some mysterious passion. Zealous lovers choose to act in loving ways regardless of whether the feelings are there at the moment.

M. Scott Peck, a social scientist, said, "Laziness is a major cause of evil, a primary cause of psychological illness and the main reason Americans are increasingly failing at human relations."

Moral sloth—too lazy to serve: Jesus names the goat the mascot for laziness. "For I was hungry and you [the goats] gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me" (Matthew 25:42-43). The goats are too lazy to mark out time for people struggling in life.

Maxie Dunnam, Methodist pastor, writes: "You're lazy when the suffering of another causes you no pain. You're lazy when your blood does not run hot in the face of blatant injustice. You're lazy when you evade truth that hurts and accept an easy lie. You're lazy when you are not willing to put forth the energy necessary to save a dying relationship" (*The Workbook on the 7 Deadly Sins*).

Sloth is the unwillingness to do what we know would be good for ourselves, others and the kingdom of God. I can't change the world, but I can give enough to feed one person who is suffering in a refugee camp. I can't change the world, but I can call one person who is lonely and without family. I can't change the world, but I can do something. I can serve and that service will change the world.

Spiritual sloth—too lazy to grow: Spiritual growth is hard work. It is not easy to repent of sin, ask for forgiveness and develop new patterns of behavior. It is not easy to practice daily Bible reading and prayer. It takes commitment to worship weekly with the body of Christ.

Isn't it strange that we can be busily lazy? Which area of sloth catches your attention? Circle it. Confess it as sin. Make one commitment to live life differently. Ask God for new diligence, perseverance, discipline and fortitude.

TheMennonite

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@TheMennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Kristene Miller**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Vol. 9, No. 21, November 7, 2006

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

Web site
www.TheMennonite.org

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.Goshen, IN 46526

Mennonite Church USA

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Cover: Illustration by Dee Birkey

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

One mean Mennonite mama

I applaud Valerie Weaver-Zuercher, the gutsy author of "One Mean Mennonite Mama." She is not alone; so many of us parents struggle with anger at home. Before becoming a mother, I taught parenting classes. I helped parents who had crossed the line and abused their children. When I became a mother, I came to the harsh realization that I, too, have a temper. Thanks to my church community, I have healthy means to receive support and to vent my righteous anger. Let's continue to pray for our own families and for those without supportive communities.—*Jeanette Harder, Omaha, Neb.*

Empty nest will be full again

Re Michael King's article, "It Really Is Empty in this Nest" (Real Families, Oct. 3): Yes, our children spread their wings and leave the nest. But take courage, Michael. In a few years your birds will return for visits and holidays with baby birds in tow, and your nest will be full. The emptiness will be gone for a while and your heart will be full again.—*Irma Weaver, Washington, Ill.*

Those who hate peace

Arthur Paul Boers' article, "Dwelling Among Those Who Hate Peace" (Oct. 3) helpfully alerts us to the ways President Bush has used the language of Christianity without following its Commander-in-Chief.

We do not expect governments to follow the Sermon on the Mount, yet I wonder: If, after 9/11, President Bush had chosen the recent Amish response to evil and violence and declared, "As a nation, we will forgive our enemies, we will build relationships with them and we will seek their healing," would our country today be any less secure?—*Weldon Schloneger, Beatrice, Neb.*

Thank you for publishing Arthur Paul Boer's outstanding article, "Dwelling Among Those Who Hate Peace." There is no arguing that Jesus' teachings on peace are out of step with the wider world. Unless we actively continue to teach peace we will allow our culture, rather than Jesus, to determine our beliefs and actions.—*Drollene and Abe Gehman, Bally, Pa.*

Thanks to Arthur Boers for his engaging and inspiring article. I, too, have wondered about the silence among Mennonites regarding the current administration's use of Christian language to define itself. Could it be that we Mennonites are not familiar with civil religion and not able to discern this distorted use of Christian faith?

Two years ago around election time in our area some Mennonites were referring to Bush as the new messiah. If, in fact, our silence is a sign of having prematurely sold out our spiritual porridge, then Boers' article serves as a timely wake-up call to return to the Messiah whose mission is to bring abundant life for all the world, not a chosen few, and to save not destroy lives.—*Roy Bender, Lancaster, Pa.*

Redefine terms

We praise and thank the Lord for the marvelous faith testimony to America and to the world of our Amish brethren in Pennsylvania as an outcome of their horror, pain and grief in recent days. They responded in a positive way to a unique faith-witness opportunity with forgiveness and compassion: a Christlike way in their tearful hour of trial. As gruesome and horrible as the fatal events were, their What Would Jesus Do? response was to demonstrate grace and forgiveness, even in the depths of their sorrow.

Several terms come to mind from Anabaptist history that might shed light on their perspective so as to help us discover or rediscover the basis for a response such as theirs: The German "Gewehrlosigkeit" means "without arms (guns, bombs) or weapons; defenseless." "Gewaltlosigkeit" means without force or violence. Among us are many who could enlighten us by contrasting these old Anabaptist terms with our contemporary peace position—not only to deal with them historically but also biblically. In other words, redefine for us in the biblical teaching and Christian responses to violence in the world in which we live.—*Otto Warkentin, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Our cover story (page 8) returns to an issue that generated many letters last spring: sharing in worship. In this article, however, Alan Kreider describes the roots of sharing that can be found in some Bible texts and within our Anabaptist tradition. Much of our original reporting in this issue relates to developments within Mennonite Church USA—especially around activities for young adults. Assistant editor Anna Groff provides extended coverage of two important young adult meetings (pages 22 and 23) as well as a project in Pittsburgh that benefits from the energy and leadership of many young adult Mennonites (page 16). We also provide exclusive coverage of the most recent Constituency Leaders Council (page 24) as this group addresses a pressing matter: the role of area conferences and their future in church structures. Finally, we note that Mennonite Mutual Aid has named Larry D. Miller as its new president (page 21).—*Editor*

Invest in members, not buildings

I received a free copy of the Oct. 3 issue of *The Mennonite*. We simply quit receiving the paper because it no longer showed up in our church mailbox. If *The Mennonite* is the official church paper, should it not be in every member's mailbox at church? Is it not necessary for the membership to know what is going on in the larger church and also within the committees and boards?

Some big things appear to be happening—whether there is any feedback from the membership or not. How can the Executive Board make the decision to build such an expensive headquarter building when there is still a huge unresolved, unpaid, underutilized and unused building in Scottdale ("Elkhart, Ind., Building Project Approved," Oct. 3)?

I would like to see *The Mennonite* in my church mailbox, and I would like to learn that much of our investment is coming back to all church mailboxes. A small investment in the members might occasionally yield far greater returns than the huge investment in facilities.—*Elva Mast, Goshen, Ind.*

Editor's note: We sent copies of the Oct. 3 issue to 4,000 former subscribers and invited them to subscribe again. This letter-writer was one of those who received the Oct. 3 issue and subscription offer.

Not loving costs more than loving

The neighborhoods where most of my time is spent are prisons. One of the inmates wrote a letter expressing how much he has grown spiritually at Bible study. He said that I always tell them how much God loves them. He went on to say what really convinced him was the love in my heart for all the guys. He went on to say he only wished I was in the neighborhood more often.

According to our Lord and Savior, the world is our neighborhood, and every person in it is our neighbor whom we should love as ourselves. First John 3:18 (NIV) says, "Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." Real love takes action. The Bible says love can be seen and touched—it is tangible. To love in God's neighborhood is to take risks, to expose our hearts. Sometimes it hurts. It hurt Christ, but he kept on loving even at the cost of his life. He commanded us, "Love one another as I have loved you," (John 15:12). Nothing costs as much as loving, except not loving.

Is your heart full of love for the lost? Those who deserve love the least need it the most. If you walk with God, you won't run from people's needs. Love is an active verb in God's neighborhood. Our love for Christ is only as real as our love for our neighbor.—*Bill Hartwell, Omaha, Neb.*

Remember God's shalom vision

Re the editorial by Everett J. Thomas ("Do Worry, Be Happy," Oct. 3). Thomas' conclusion about the teaching of Jesus is not supported by the text. Is Jesus saying that those who leave everything to follow him will become personally, materially wealthy? Is it possible—especially in light of the sharing of wealth in Acts and Jesus' contention that our mother, brothers and sisters are those that do God's will—that Jesus is referring to the blessing of being joint heirs with Christ in a community where all is shared generously?

If what Thomas says is right, Jesus is inviting disciples into a spiral of competing desires: You must sell all you have, give to the poor and follow him. But as you follow him, you will become wealthy (a wealth you must give to the poor in order to follow Jesus). There has to be middle ground between the "everyone is wealthy like us" or "everyone is poor like them" options Thomas kicks around. How about: No one has too much or too little but just enough to thrive and grow into the people God created them to be? Let us not forget God's shalom vision when talking about money.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

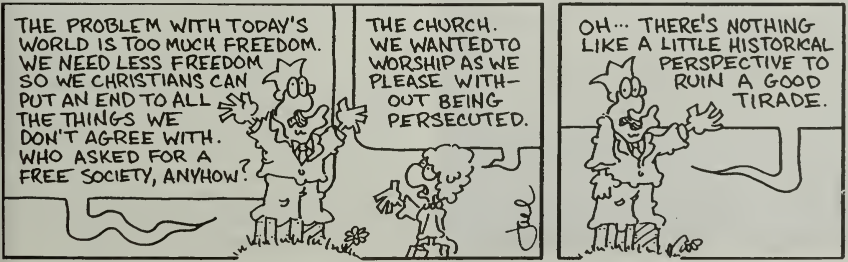
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Regarding sharing time in worship, our congregation (75 votes):

- ○ Has one, and it works well (59%)
- ○ Has one, and it does not work well (13%)
- ○ Does not have one, but I wish it did (9%)
- ○ Does not have one, and I'm glad (19%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


THE PROBLEM WITH TODAY'S WORLD IS TOO MUCH FREEDOM. WE NEED LESS FREEDOM SO WE CHRISTIANS CAN PUT AN END TO ALL THE THINGS WE DON'T AGREE WITH. WHO ASKED FOR A FREE SOCIETY, ANYHOW?
THE CHURCH. WE WANTED TO WORSHIP AS WE PLEASE WITHOUT BEING PERSECUTED.
OH··· THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE TO RUIN A GOOD TIRADE.

IN BRIEF

McLaren tells Mennonites to 'stop being quiet'

Nine days after the shooting of Amish school children in Lancaster County, Pa., and the immediate forgiveness extended by the Amish, Christian author and speaker Brian McLaren told a Goshen (Ind.) College audience Oct. 11, "I don't think anyone has ever done a better job of sharing the message of the gospel; the Amish's behavior mystified the world." In public lectures on the Goshen campus Oct. 11-12 and in classes and small group settings with students and local pastors, McLaren called Mennonites and Anabaptists to stop being the "quiet in the land" and share more loudly and broadly the distinctives that formed and shaped the faith since its beginnings 500 years ago: peacemaking, community and discipleship. "We so desperately need, as we move into this emerging culture, to learn to live a life of Christ instead of just going to church," McLaren said. "You need to let your knowledge rub off on others."—*Goshen College*

Intercultural relations director named

NEWTON, Kan.—Iris de León-Hartshorn will become the new director of intercultural relations for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, effective Jan. 18, 2007.

Iris de León-Hartshorn

She has served as director for Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries for 10 years. Prior to that she was co-pastor for 10 years at Houston (Texas) Mennonite Church, where she was ordained for ministry by Western District and South Central conferences. She also has worked as hospice and hospital chaplain and special events coordinator for Houston Habitat for Humanity.

De León-Hartshorn will work from Lancaster, Pa., at least for the first several years and will be traveling throughout the church in her new role. She will begin her work by attending the Executive Board meeting in Meridian, Miss., in January 2007. She is married to Leo Hartshorn, minister of peace and justice for the Mission Network.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Detweiler named acting MCC director

AKRON, Pa.—Lowell Detweiler has been named acting executive director of Mennonite Central Committee in the wake of the Oct. 23 resignation of Robb Davis, MCC executive director since June 1, 2005. Detweiler is a longtime MCC staff member and former director of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS).

MCC executive committee approved Detweiler's appointment during the weekend of Oct. 28. It is viewed as a short-term position while the committee seeks an interim executive director.

The MCC executive committee has asked MCC staff to continue moving forward key initiatives Davis had begun work on, such as changes in the MCC governance structure, network facilitation, international program initiatives, a salary review and human resources initiatives.

Lowell Detweiler

Detweiler and his wife, Ruth, began service with MCC in 1959 as teachers in Newfoundland. With their two children, they served with MCC in Tanzania from 1968 to 71. Detweiler served as director of the MCC personnel department from 1971 to 82 and MCC East Coast from 1982 to 86. Currently he is interim director of the MCC human resources department.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

1958 – CATECHISM CLASS – 2006

Chuck Gehring

Baptism class reunion

Seventeen members of a catechism class of 25 baptized in 1958 in Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan., got together on Sept. 23 and shared stories of their spiritual pilgrimages.

EMU honors alumni for achievements, service

HARRISONBURG, Va. - The Alumni Association of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) honored two of its graduates Oct. 15 for their work in reflecting the school's vision, mission and values.

Catherine R. Mumaw, a 1954 EMU graduate and veteran educator from Corvallis, Ore., received EMU's 2006 "alumna of the year" award, presented annually to a graduate who has been recognized for significant achievements in their profession, community or church.

Claude Good of Lansdale, Pa., also a 1954 graduate, received the "distinguished service award," which recognizes graduates who have demonstrated in notable ways the Christian service and peacemaking emphases of the university.

Mumaw, a home economics graduate, returned to teach courses in that discipline at her alma mater, 1957-1974. She earned a master's degree in 1958 and a doctorate in 1967 from Penn State University. She was professor and chair of the home economics department at Goshen (Ind.) College, 1974-1986, and served as associate professor in human development and family studies at Oregon State University, 1987-1995.

Mumaw retired early from her work in Nepal. From 1995-99, through Mennonite Central Committee, she was an education adviser for Kathmandu University School of Education. There she and her colleagues worked to improve education especially in Nepal's primary schools.

Sarah Adams

ng with HIV, singing to the Lord
oir of people living with HIV performs in churches in
s Ababa, Ethiopia. Ethiopia is home to one of the world's
est HIV-positive populations, with up to 1 million people
cted. The choir's songs reflect the importance of their faith
how it feels to live with HIV and AIDS.—*Mennonite Central*
mittee

Good and his wife, Alice Longenecker Good, also a member of the class of 1954, lived among the Triqui Indians in Mexico for 25 years while translating the New Testament into their language.

With intestinal worms a major medical problem among the children they served, Good looked for ways to treat malnutrition caused by roundworms that can devour 25 to 30 percent of the food eaten by a child each day. His investigations resulted in the "Worm Project" (www.fmc-online.org/worm-project), a medical treatment that, for about two cents a pill, can eradicate most parasitic worms in a child for up to six months.—*Eastern Mennonite University*

Blogging as spiritual discipline

HARRISONBURG, Va.—When East Coasters are sleeping, Will Fitzgerald is brewing morning devotionals.

Fitzgerald, who blogs based on Third Way Café's daily "Sip of Scripture" passages, is Third Way Café's first known regular blogger and a computer scientist who commutes weekly between his home in Kalamazoo, Mich., and his job in California at a start up company called Powerset.

Fitzgerald, 50, has been voluntarily writing a daily blog—or Web log—since January called "a simple desire," offering commentary on the daily Bible verse chosen to reflect Anabaptist teachings and emphases. Third Way Café seeks to put a public face on Mennonites.

Fitzgerald is a first-generation Mennonite whose blog grew out of his desire to see more writing on the Internet from a Mennonite perspective. "One way to see that happen is to write some of it myself, as someone who has, relatively late in life, come to identify the way I seek to follow Jesus as Mennonite," he says.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

COMB Management Team reviews progress

NEWTON, Kan.—The Covenant Mutual Benefit Plan (COMB) Management Team recently met to review its experience thus far for 2006 and set rates for the 2007 fiscal year beginning Jan. 1.

COMB provides health insurance, disability and life insurance for congregational employees for 10 participating area conferences within Mennonite Church USA. Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) representatives at the meeting reported the trend increase in the health industry for the past year is 15.5 percent. Because of COMB's good past year and the financial strength COMB is experiencing, it will be able to offer a rate for 2007 considerably less than would otherwise have been required and less than the industry experience. COMB has also been able to bring its reserves up to the MMA recommended level.

A survey of COMB participants conducted through MMA showed that overall, 74.4 percent reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the COMB plan, and 71.9 percent reported their congregation sees COMB as an expression of mutual aid. Further, 85.9 percent said they personally see COMB as an expression of mutual aid.

A decision was made one year ago to secure Highmark, an affiliate of Blue Cross/Blue Shield, to handle COMB claims through its network of Preferred Provider Organizations. The COMB Management Team reports this decision has contributed to its positive claim experience this past year, which has resulted in an ability to offer a more competitive premium rate for next year. According to the survey, 70.8 percent of respondents report this to have been a positive change in the quality of service provided, and 76.6 percent reported not having noticed any difference in their health-care providers.—*Mennonite Church USA*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Europe volume of Global History Series released

Testing Faith and Tradition, the history of European Mennonite churches, has been released as part of the Global Mennonite History Series. A project of Mennonite World Conference, this second volume in the series tells the story of Mennonite churches coming into being across Europe, endeavoring to remain faithful through nearly five centuries. *Testing Faith and Tradition: Global Mennonite History Series, Europe* is available in the United States from Good Books (GoodBooks.com), 800-762-7171. *—Mennonite World Conference*

Fasting for peace

For the past 24 years, Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, a 65-year-old Melkite priest, has fasted from July 1 to Aug. 9 (40 days) for the conversion of Christians to nonviolence. Christ's rejection of violence is the clearest of New Testament teachings, he says, yet for most Christians "nonviolence is a non-thought." He ends the fast on Aug. 9 to mark the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, the most Catholic city in Japan. *—National Catholic Reporter*

The recovery

by Alan Kreider

Sharing time is a way to connect our stories with God's story.

Arthur Paul Boers' article on sharing in worship (Feb. 21) was a much-needed wake-up call. By describing sharing time's tendency to be human-centered, self-indulgent and indiscrete, Arthur indicates ways sharing time can go off the rails.

But what is sharing time like when it is on the rails? We need to dream about this in light of history and theology. We need to see sharing time's roots in biblical testimony and to envision its potential for the church today. The way we share in sharing time is often flawed; let's admit that and seek to change.

Sharing time is a means of connecting our stories with God's story. "I have not hidden your saving help within my heart, I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation" (Psalm 40:10). The Psalmist knew that reporting God's deeds in our lives is a way to remind the worshiping community that God is at work now.

The congregation at worship collects evidence that the God who was active in biblical times is also active now.

The congregation at worship collects evidence that the God who was active in biblical times is also active now. Seen in this light, sharing time can be a means of recovering the practice of testimony.

The roots of testimony are deep in the Bible. Not only in the Psalms of thanksgiving but in psalms of lament: "I lie down among lions" (Psalm 57:4). Jesus observes that the woman who discovered the lost coin wanted to tell others: "Rejoice with me!" (Luke 15:9). In Acts, Luke reports that the leaders of the Jerusalem church ran to their friends, assembled in worship, to tell them what they had experienced at the hands of the chief priests (Acts 4:23).

Testimony is also central to early Anabaptism. In the 1530s, Swiss Anabaptists refused to attend established churches in which professional clergy monopolized worship services. Referring to 1 Corinthians 14:26, they asked of the state churches in whose worship only clergy could speak, "Who can or will regard or confess this to be a spiritual congregation?" Testimony also has roots in the old Amish-Mennonite practice of having responses of "yea and Amen" after the sermons. Deep in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, there is the assumption that the congregation will give the Holy Spirit space in worship to produce surprise.

How about today? Often, as Arthur states, we do badly. Can we build on Arthur's insights and learn to do better? I think so. We can discover or recover the practice of testimony. I propose three ways to do this. The first two are spontaneous and can occur in sharing time, which in many congregations comes after the sermon; the third form is the prepared testimony and can take place at other times in the service.

Practice 1: responses to the sermon. These are means of not wasting the sermon. What do we listeners do with the sermons? Do we take notes? Do we discuss the sermons? Can we, like the Old Mennonites of a century ago, provide a point to say yes to what we have heard God saying? Can we find some way to relate God's story, proclaimed by the preacher, to our stories and our congregation's story?

In sharing time, testimonies can respond to the sermon. Not long ago, in our congregation the preacher expounded John 15:1-8, urging us to be pruned by Jesus' words and thus abide in the Word and inhabit the Scriptures. In the sharing time that followed, several people spoke, two of whom responded specifically to the sermon. One was visibly moved as he reflected on his father, who had died recently; as a teenager his father had discovered that by reading and memorizing the Bible he had been enabled to overcome immobilizing doubt. Another member recalled a time of trauma in her life, known to many in the congregation, in which God's Word had carried her through the crisis.

The aim of the post-sermon testimony is to underscore the preacher's message, to affirm that God has spoken to the person bearing testimony, and to suggest that God's word preached connects to the stories of the hearers. Congregation members who hear testimonies like this are likely to remember the sermon and appropriate it in their lives. They will not waste the sermon.

God is doing something in history and has invited us and our congregations to enter into God's work. Where have we seen God's gracious intervention?

Practice 2: spontaneous testimonies in sharing time. Where sharing time is on the rails, these are not announcements; they are what an English theologian calls "reports from the front." God is doing something in history and has invited us and our congregations to enter into God's work. Where have we seen God's gracious intervention? Where does the world cry out in pain? Where do we see the principalities and powers apparently immovable,

Continued on page 10

# of witness

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in need of God's dethroning through the work of Christ and the witness of Christ's people?

If sharing time goes off the rails, it is often because it reflects the limited social experience of the church's members. In many middle-class churches most members' lives are secure, so the dominant concern has to do with health, which the members can't control. These are a source of personal anxiety and have a place among prayer requests. But as our congregations lose security, and get involved in the needs of our neighborhoods and the global church, then we have other things to share and pray about. "Help, God!" will still be there, but also "Rejoice with me!"

Not long ago, in our congregation's sharing time, the following testimonies and concerns emerged: a mother spoke of her multilayered life God is helping her hold together; a member gave thanks to God that jobs were opening up for the church's new voluntary service unit and urged the congregation to pray for the right volunteers; an 11-year-old reported finding bags of marijuana on her way home from school; a teacher asked for prayer for the local school where she teaches, in which redistricting is affecting the school's social mix; a member asked the congregation to pray for his mother-in-law, who was about to have an operation. After these contributions I felt energized.

Testimony is a spiritual practice that can be modeled, taught and learned. It glorifies God and can help keep us on the rails.

God, in the midst of the realities of our lives, is alive. In response to each contribution, the elder carrying the mike led the congregation in a response—either "Thanks be to God" or "Lord, hear our prayer." As the sharing time culminated, the pastor offered these concerns to God with a mixture of hope and thanksgiving.

Practice 3: prepared testimonies. A new book by Lillian Daniel, *Tell It Like It Is: Reclaiming the Practice of Testimony* (Alban Institute, 2006) has brought these to the foreground. For six years Daniel pastored a United Church of Christ congregation in New England. Through the recovery of testimony this mainline Protestant church experienced growth in numbers and in spiritual vitality. The practice of testimony began in the annual stewardship drive, as members spoke about how their faith affected their giving. Faith-sharing became a practice that spilled out into the other Sundays of the year. Each week members looked forward to hearing the faith journeys of others. The pastor prescribed only one rule—every testimony must mention God explicitly. Gradually the members began to learn how to talk about God in their life. And this spread to other parts of the church's life. If there were to be "no God-less testimonies," there also were to be "no God-less announcements."

We Christians exist because of God's work in Christ. In various ways we experience God. And we grow in faith as we learn to talk about our stories with God and as we listen to the stories of others. Recent research has indicated that American Christians today—middle-aged as well as young—find it embarrassing to talk about God. We need to learn how to be more articulate about our faith. One Mennonite church I know experienced what happened in Lillian Daniel's congregation: When people began to talk about their faith journeys, attendance went up. We may not talk easily about God, but we are hungry for God. A five-minute prepared testimony in the morning service, which gives a neighbor or a teacher a chance to say how God is at work in her life, can help keep the church on the rails.

I dream of churches whose members learn to talk about God. I long for a rediscovery of testimony. And I believe that sharing time, if it is not "God-less," can be a vehicle for this. Testimony is a spiritual practice that can be modeled, taught and learned. It glorifies God and can help keep us on the rails. In it we can experience God's transforming presence.

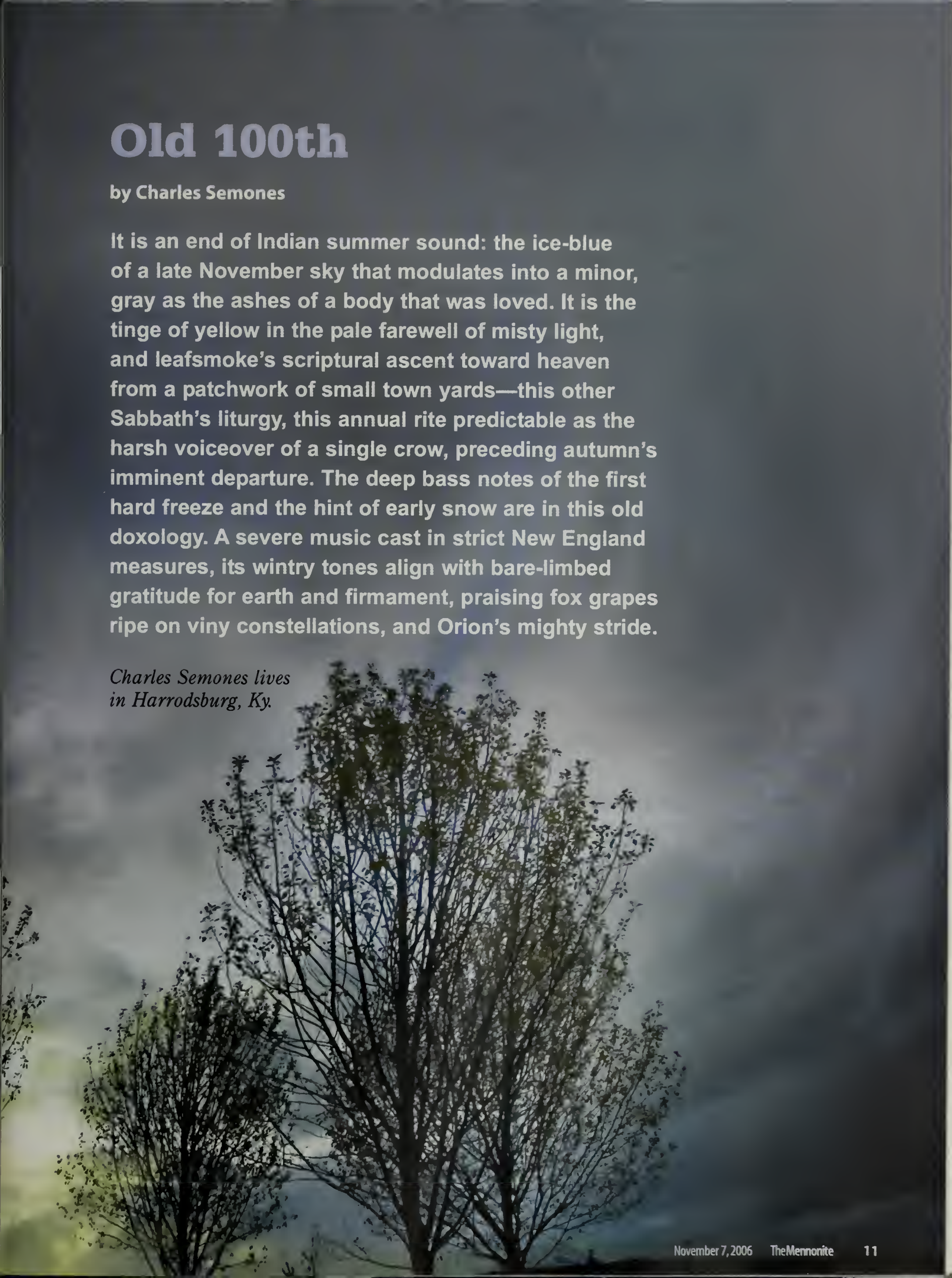
Alan Kreider is associate professor of church history and mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Old 100th

by Charles Semones

**It is an end of Indian summer sound: the ice-blue
of a late November sky that modulates into a minor,
gray as the ashes of a body that was loved. It is the
tinge of yellow in the pale farewell of misty light,
and leafsmoke's scriptural ascent toward heaven
from a patchwork of small town yards—this other
Sabbath's liturgy, this annual rite predictable as the
harsh voiceover of a single crow, preceding autumn's
imminent departure. The deep bass notes of the first
hard freeze and the hint of early snow are in this old
doxology. A severe music cast in strict New England
measures, its wintry tones align with bare-limbed
gratitude for earth and firmament, praising fox grapes
ripe on viny constellations, and Orion's mighty stride.**

*Charles Semones lives
in Harrodsburg, Ky.*



Embodying Go

The gift of congregational sharing

by June Mears Driedger

New Year's Day was on Sunday. I knew we would be a small group for worship, and indeed we were. Our worship time was simply structured—singing hymns and reading Scripture as well as reflecting on and sharing together our responses to two questions: Where was God present last year? and, Where do we pray and hope God will be present this next year?

Our sharing ranged from rejoicing a clear health report after more than a year of finishing chemotherapy to grieving the struggles of a young adult attending college miles away. We asked for prayer from one another for post-graduation employment, possible overseas assignments and courage to use the gifts God has given us. We sang, laughed, talked and cried together. There was a deep sense of God moving in and among us during our small worship that morning.

Our relationships with one another are often built on the sharing that happens Sunday morning—we hear and learn from one another and make connections with our own lives, then with one another.

We concluded our worship with prayer, thanking God for being present in the year just past and asking God to be present in the year to come. We left our worship praising and blessing God.

Afterward, in the church foyer, we gathered into even smaller clusters or one-on-one conversations, sharing more deeply with one another what we had shared in the larger group. The shyer folks encouraged those who shared publicly. More tears came in these private conversations as well as hugs offered and received. Most of those present told me later that it was a wonderful way to begin the new year, and they were grateful for our focused sharing together.

Again I was reminded that when we share we are able to be God's loving presence to one another, whether we are the ones sharing or the ones listening. In congregational sharing, we embody God's love and presence for one another.

In our congregation, Michigan State University Mennonite Fellowship in East Lansing, Mich., sharing is an important—even essential—aspect of our worship and life together. We are a small congregation, with people driving long distances to be in worship on Sunday morning. For a variety of life circumstances, this is their only time to connect with a worshiping community each week. For those living closer, particularly college and graduate students, school work demands an enormous chunk of time during the week, and Sunday is their primary time to connect with a worshiping community. Our sharing time is part of the foundation for community life. Or, to borrow an expression from the 1970s, it is "body life" time—the building of the body of Christ within the context of worship. It is part of the foundation to join our hearts together with love to create a church community. Our relationships with one another are often built on the sharing that happens Sunday morning—we hear and learn from one another and make connections with our own lives, then with one another.

Sharing in our worship service connects our stories with the larger faith story. I hear one of the elder wise-women share about her experience of overwhelming love for God during her daily devo-

or one another

tions and prayer. I hear her tearfully share about reading a Psalm and bursting into praise for God—"I love you, God! Thank you so much for loving me!" She shares this in her humble, gentle way, and as I look around the room, many others have tears in their eyes as we listen to her testimony. Her story of love and praise for God connects her to the biblical stories of praise and love. In turn, our listening increases our desire to express our love and praise to God within our own faith stories.

Congregational sharing helps us learn to listen to one another with love. There are some people who are so lonely and so longing to be heard that they repeatedly share on Sunday morning. When we listen to each other, even if it is week after week, we embody God's loving, spacious, generous, kind presence to one another.

Years ago, when I was just learning how to lead worship, I decided to limit the sharing that morning. It was a decision born out of my impatience and lack of inner spaciousness for others. There was a retired missionary who shared every week he was in worship. As I reflect back, I see there was a sweetness to his sharing as well as genuineness to his testimonies of God's love. But I thought he rambled on and so, in my impatience, I cut him off, although I tried to be funny about it. I wasn't. There were frowns and disapproving body-shifting from the congregation. Afterward I was told by dear friends that what I did was not helpful to the life and health of the congregation, and I may have spoiled the movement of the Holy Spirit in the worship service. My friends explained that our gift as a congregation to this retired missionary was to extend listening hearts and ears to him—to extend love and grace to him even if his weekly sharing rambled a bit.

Congregational sharing also is a time and place to speak what one could not speak outside a church context. I saw this during the weeks following the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The university students shared how they felt marginalized by the discussions of retaliation and war among their classmates. The anger around them was intense, and they wanted to be around like-minded hearts and souls, longing for peace and nonviolence. The students found it during our worship and were free to share their struggles alongside the others.

Finally, praying about the shared joys and concerns further extends our embodiment of God for one another. This prayer can become an opportunity for the worship leader to help the congregation articulate and pray for the concerns of the people as well as praising and thanking God for God's work in our lives. If done with sensitivity, this can be a "teachable moment" of prayer for those who struggle with prayer. It also can be a way of blessing one another through prayer.

Not long ago, one of the children—a kindergartner—asked her mother to share on her behalf that she found a dead rabbit on Saturday and they buried it. During the congregational prayer, the worship leader thanked God for the girl's compassion and care for God's creature. The worship leader then prayed for the girl by name and asked God to bless her and continue nurturing her compassionate heart. The girl heard this prayer—and while she probably doesn't understand what it means to have a compassionate heart, she does know what it means to be blessed for being who God has created her to be.

Congregational sharing also is a time and place to speak what one could not speak outside a church context.

In worship we share with God our joys and sorrows, our praise and lament. As the gathered body of Christ we offer this sharing up to God and receive this sharing from one another. This sharing allows us to offer the loving face of God as we listen to one another and allows us to receive God's loving gaze when we share. In congregational sharing, we embody God's love and presence for one another as sharers and listeners.

June Mears Driedger is pastor of Michigan State University Mennonite Fellowship in East Lansing, Mich. She also is the managing editor of Leader.

6 healthy ways t

by Dan Longenecker

The Scriptures can help our faith be vibrant.

If vibrant Christian faith and good use of Scripture go together well (like peaches and cream), then we need answers to several questions. What, for example, promotes healthy growth in Christian faith, as it relates to the Bible's use? How, on the other hand, can we avoid unhealthy ways of using Scripture? Following are six responses; each relates to and overlaps with the others.

1. Come to peace with the Bible's most basic mystery. Celebrate—without claiming to fully understand—both the Bible's divinity and its humanity. Rejoice in the divine guidance the writers experienced but equally appreciate these writers as people and the down-to-earth settings in which they wrote. See their writing as simply another expression of their human trust in God. We build on their faith and the rich evidence God helped them provide. Our certainty, like theirs, is based on trust.

This calls for giving attention to the human writer's purpose and the first readers' needs (see #4 below). It includes praying for the Holy Spirit, who inspired these human writers, to illuminate these words now. This full acceptance of our need for more light prepares us to enter the Bible's truth and meaning while nourishing the health of our spirits. Often it includes actively listening to other believers who've been feeding on and responding to the Word.

Jesus Christ unifies the Scriptures, and committing to following him gives our lives a true center, filling us with his gift of spiritual health.

Photographer: Sorinus | Dreamstime.com

2. Key in quickly to the Bible's true focus and respond to him. Jesus Christ is "the word made flesh" (incarnated): the one who fulfills the written Word. Read the Bible's early testament fully expecting it to lead you forward into its "new" testament. Stay with this strong focus on the concept of fulfillment. And don't delay giving your life to the One revealed as the Bible's living Word. Also see him then as our interpreter of the earlier Scripture, remembering the way he freely changed what had preceded: "You have heard that it was said by those of old time ... but I say to you" (three times in Matthew 5). Speaking to religious leaders who resisted him, he said, "You search the Scriptures, ... and they testify of me, but you will not come to me that you may have life." Had their hearts been open and had they permitted their own Scriptures' Spirit to lead them, they would have come to him (as many of their followers did).

We must avoid letting any part of the Scriptures compete with Christ. His promise that his Holy Spirit will guide those receiving him prepares us to start with Christ in every understanding of God's Word. Jesus Christ unifies the Scriptures, and committing to following him gives our lives a true center, filling us with his gift of spiritual health.

3. Don't reduce "believing" or "faith" to a mental exercise. The Bible gives three powerful words almost the same meaning: believe = faith = trust. Trust is the practical bottom line in each case, and it's a powerful relationship word. It means trusting another person. When we trust God, we are not simply agreeing mentally with God's words but entering a dynamic relationship. Furthermore, if any of these three powerful Bible words is used with its biblical meaning, it follows through as action or obedience. In other words, when the Bible refers to "believing"or "faith," these are never to be understood as only mental realities.

use the Bible

Indeed our minds have a pivotal place in our vital relationship with God.

The Spirit's active work in our minds is key to our new life and continuing growth. We must not permit belief and faith to be defined in a nonbiblical way—as something for only our minds to do. This makes belief and faith shallow, and it puts spiritual wellness in trouble by forcing Christians into agreement on the mental level rather than inviting them to move toward that good level of unity in the Spirit of Christ. With our modern culture's strong use of believe as a mental thing, it is easy to forget how the Bible uses this wonderful word, and spiritual health regularly suffers as a result.

4. Always keep a Bible text joined to its context. For starters, avoid separating details of a Bible story from the rest of that story. Sometimes we are tempted, for example, to focus on a glorious promise in the Scriptures and largely ignore conditions for those promises. Or we find and use a verse we like but give no heed to verses close to it that may provide more depth and integrity to our faith. As mentioned briefly (#1 above), it's sometimes critically important to know what needs the writer of this part of the Bible was dealing with. Then let that knowledge inform how we interpret that passage.

Lifting texts from here and there to build support for what we want to think can make our Bible interpretations sound temporarily powerful. But this attempt to prove can actually weaken our position. This happens if others look closer and discover the text has been separated from other key statements in its biblical paragraph. And just as a sentence or verse should be treated within its paragraph, so its paragraph or chapter needs to be seen as within its biblical book. Finally (as in #2 above), that book needs to be consciously viewed as within one of the Scriptures' two different testaments. A careless approach here can reduce the integrity of Bible teaching, and thus have a negative effect on one's spiritual wholeness and our relationships with one another.

5. Avoid the spirit of the modern scientific age. Instead of treating the Bible as a book of proofs, see it as providing us with dynamic evidence. While Bible writers were certain of what they wrote, they did not participate in the misleading scientific-proof approach so common today. The Bible is not a modern book. Its inspired writers had a spirit of direct faith/trust, and our "prove it" mentality does not build on their spiritually healthy mindset. When today's readers then treat the words of those writers as proof, the unique faith authority of these precious words is actually weakened.

While we imagine ourselves building up the Bible's divinity by treating it as proof, we paradoxically lower it to the limits of earthly science. The relational effects here are also negative, since the common results are defensiveness and an argumentative spirit. One's spiritual wellness often suffers in this way, since faith is being replaced and there is nothing left to produce joy or humility.

6. Learn to let the Bible read me. If I believe God's Word is "alive and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12), I am likely to respond to it in a unique way. We can actually present ourselves to it. We can let the Bible form us rather than simply inform us.

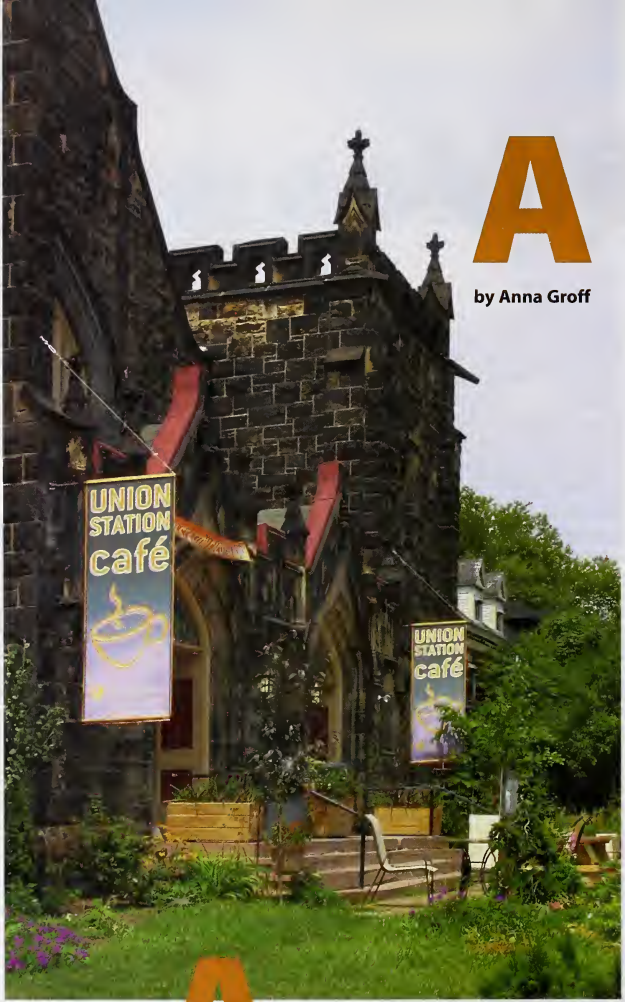
We can let the Bible form us rather than simply inform us.

Thus we can permit ourselves to unhurriedly live with some of the powerful Bible statements or questions. As someone has said, "Marinate yourself in" the Scripture God seems to be using to change your life at a particular time. Not only God's Living Word, Jesus Christ, but also his written word is sent as a gift of love. Something spiritually dynamic and healthy is happening here. Isaiah has God revealing God's clearest intent in sending his words to us (55:10-12). Trusting a person is different from mentally believing in facts and moves us toward humility, wisdom, the joy of submission and healthy relationships with those around us.

Dan Longenecker is a member of Immanuel Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

A ‘third

by Anna Groff



Anna Groff

UNION STATION café

At the Union Project’s new café, Pittsburgh locals stop in for a popular iced mocha beverage or an IBC Root Beer and choose from menu items such as the Chislett Chicken Pesto Panini or Chadwich Cheese and Veggie Quesadilla.

With the comfortable seating and wireless Internet, they just might spend the afternoon at the Union Station Café.

“A café has been part of the Union Project since the inception,” says Justin Rothshank, associate director of the Union Project. “It’s an unintimidating way for people to get their first real taste of the organization.”

The Union Project, located on the corner of Stanton and Negley Avenues in Pittsburgh, was founded in 2001 by a group of young Pittsburghers and partially restored the former Union Baptist Church. It serves as an arts-and-enterprise community center with partnering artists, community builders and people of faith.

Jessica King, a Mennonite and executive director of the Union Project, says the café offers a “grass-roots” approach to connecting with people face to face and introducing them to the church services and art classes offered by the Union Project.

The Union Station Café opened in June, and its proceeds will feed back into programs. The café currently employs six students from Peabody High School. “They’re some of our best employees,” says King.

Through the partnership with the culinary arts academy at Peabody High School, the school instructor recommended students apply for a position at the café. The students provided input for the café from the beginning, says Rothshank, a Goshen (Ind.) College graduate and a founder of the Union Project. For example, the directors brainstormed with the students about menu options and marketing ideas for the café.

Work at the café provides relevant job experience in culinary arts for the high-school students, Rothshank says. The students learn customer service, cleaning skills and a cash register system that would be common to many in restaurant chains.

For Sadeá Frison, 16, working at the café is her first job. She says it came at a good time, as she was looking for a job at the beginning of summer.

Frison, who is interested in working in culinary arts in the future, says her position at the café provides her with necessary skills. While it took awhile for her to learn how to make the hot drinks, making the sandwiches were “a piece of cake.”

King says they always intended to involve high-school students and neighborhood residents from the East Liberty and Highland Park neighborhoods, where the Union Project is located. People that work at the café should be part of the community, she says.

place'

The Union Station Café helps build community in a poor Pittsburgh neighborhood.

Anna Groff

First job: Sadeá Frison works at the Union Project's café.

After graduating from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., 10 years ago, King participated in the Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience (PULSE) program and worked as a founder of the Union Project. She experienced the close-knit church and ethnic communities in that part of Pittsburgh, which is predominantly poor and almost entirely African-American. She says she learned what it means to live, invest and find home in a city. "That laid the groundwork for this level of enterprise," she says.

Growing up Mennonite in Lancaster County, Pa., King finds the concept of community "ingrained" in her experience. Mennonites have this cultural and religious heritage of mutual aid and taking care of one another, she says. While it might be a foreign concept to some people, it "strikes a chord" with a lot of people, she adds.

King says the café serves as a "third place," a term from a theory that people need a physical space, other than work or home, to visit on a daily basis. These third places offer a public space for people to regularly meet and build relationships.

John Stahl-Wert, who founded PULSE, MennoCorp's inaugural program, and serves as the president of the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, says the bedrock of the Union Project's strategy plan is to create enterprises that address the surrounding community's economic, spiritual and social needs. The way the leaders of the Union Project think is more "entrepreneurial than charitable," he says.

The bedrock of the Union Project's strategy plan is to create enterprises that address the surrounding community's economic, spiritual and social needs.

Opening the café fulfills one of the core dreams of the Union Project's founding group, he says.

From a financial standpoint, Stahl-Wert says the café must profit the Union Project, and the "results are hitting the targets." As profit margins grow, programs can continue to grow.

King says the Union Project is slowly seeing the impact of the café. "It's really encouraging to see the diversity of customers," she says. The usage of the rest of the space is increasing, she adds.

The café also functions as a caterer for events, such as community meetings and board meetings. It has provided coffee services for five weddings since its opening.

The Union Project also houses several offices, including PULSE and Plumb Media, a multimedia developing company started by Goshen College graduates Nik Stoltzfus and Matt Mullet, moved in last month.

Anna Groff is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

Another look at being lost

A reminder to be aware of who is lost

by Gay Brunt Miller

I set out on a bright, crisp February morning to visit a congregation located about an hour away, in an area I have rarely traveled. My Mapquest instructions led me to the general area, but suddenly the road signs didn't seem to match my directions. I backtracked several times, but I couldn't figure out where I had gone wrong. The extra cushion of time I had allowed myself to find the unfamiliar location was nearly exhausted. One option I had not explored didn't seem to make sense, but I was not finding my destination otherwise, so I gave it a try.

How many people do we encounter in life who may also know they are lost? How many wish they had the courage to ask us for prayer?

As this road led me to a whole other part of town, a few street signs encouraged me that I was on the right trail. But it was now nearly time for the worship service to begin, so with my North American gotta-be-punctual anxiety rising, I stopped at a gas station to seek confirmation that I was headed in the right direction.

As I entered the small building, I saw an attendant behind the counter at the far end of the room. He was an older gentleman, with slightly graying hair and a thick mustache. Directions in hand, I greeted him. "Sir, I'm lost. Can you help me?"

His response has rung in my head many times since. In a strong Hispanic accent he said, "I'm lost, too. Will you pray for me?"

Surprised, I blubbered something like, "Sure, I'll pray for you," meaning, When I am at home having my quiet time, I'll say a prayer for you, Mr. Stranger. Catching my breath, I continued lamely, "Ironically, I'm trying to find a church, and my directions aren't making sense. Can you tell me if I am getting close?"

He looked at my paper and said he thought I may be on the right trail. He added that he wasn't from this area either and encouraged me to ask elsewhere if I didn't find it soon.

I thanked him, and as I started to leave, he called out to me again, "Wait!" He motioned for me to come back. "Here," he said, as he handed me a candle, "please light this in your church and pray for me." In amazement, I took the candle, thanked him again and left.

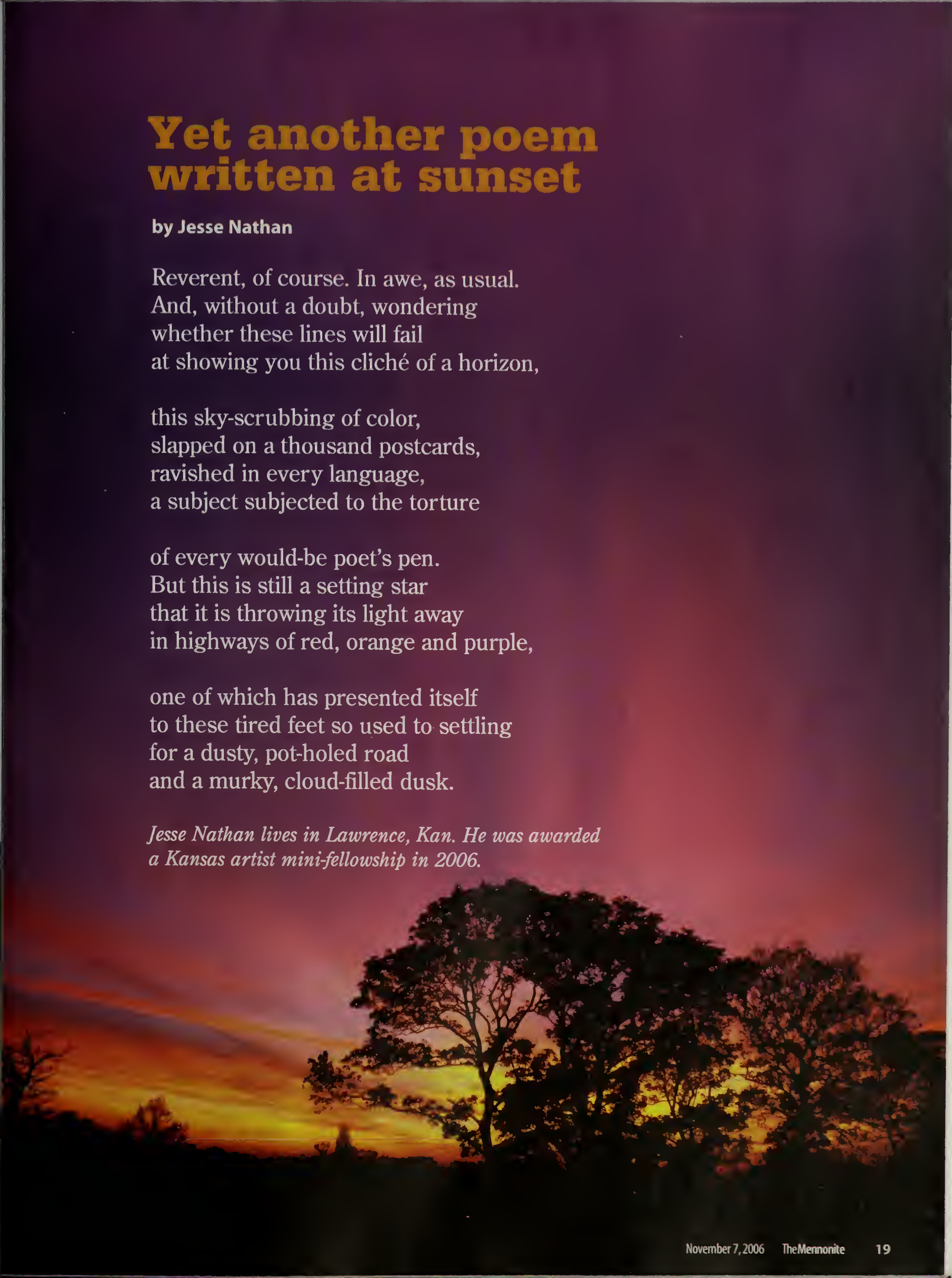
I still have the candle. As the man requested, I took it to my own church the next week, shared the story with the congregation, lit the candle, and we prayed for that man. It was a moving experience.

But the interaction with that man has left me wondering about several things. How many people do we encounter in life who may also know they are lost? How many wish they had the courage to ask us for prayer? And why didn't it even occur to me to respond to his request immediately?

I still light the candle when I have my quiet time. As I pray for that man, I also pray for others who are lost, who I may pass without even noticing them. May God give me eyes to see them and a sensitive spirit to respond to the needs of their hearts—whether spoken or unspoken.

I'm glad the "lost man" gave me the candle, because it serves as a reminder that this encounter really happened, that it was not just my imagination. And sometimes I wonder, Was he really just an "ordinary" man?

Gay Brunt Miller is director of administration for Franconia Mennonite Conference in Souderton, Pa.



Yet another poem written at sunset

by Jesse Nathan

Reverent, of course. In awe, as usual.
And, without a doubt, wondering
whether these lines will fail
at showing you this cliché of a horizon,

this sky-scrubbing of color,
slapped on a thousand postcards,
ravished in every language,
a subject subjected to the torture

of every would-be poet's pen.
But this is still a setting star
that it is throwing its light away
in highways of red, orange and purple,

one of which has presented itself
to these tired feet so used to settling
for a dusty, pot-holed road
and a murky, cloud-filled dusk.

Jesse Nathan lives in Lawrence, Kan. He was awarded a Kansas artist mini-fellowship in 2006.

Christ or the world—time to choose

Brian Lay is a member of the Sermon on the Mount Mennonite Church in Sioux Falls, S.D. He can be contacted at brian.lay@hotmail.com.

As a martial artist, I became involved with all aspects of the arts—from physical prowess to their spiritual teaching of "Do" (pronounced doe). "Do" means "the way" or "path" of living one's life in "the way" of all things. Martial arts are a tool, used to spread this humanistic/occultic view to the masses. "Do" is in virtually every aspect of the martial arts, and the average person has no idea.

In many martial art schools, the term "Do" is in the terminology, such as the Korean word "Dobak." Americans call it a uniform, but it can translate as "a spiritual protector one wears when learning "the way."

Americans call the Korean term "Dojang" ("Dojo" in Japanese) a school, but it translates as "a place to practice 'the way.'" The Japanese term for instructor is "Sensei." This literally means "one who has gone before us."

A student comes to the Dojang, puts on their Dobak and learns a martial art (probably one with "Do" in its name, such as Taekwon-Do), from the Sensei. Nothing wrong with that, but if we say it as it literally means, we see a problem.

The disciple comes to the place of learning the way, wearing their spiritual protector, while practicing the way of self-perfection in the way of all things, from the one who has gone before us in the way. Sounds different, doesn't it?

Not every martial arts instructor is evil. Many are kind, go to church, teach Sunday school and are contributing members of the community. However, they have been subtly conditioned by Eastern/New Age philosophical deceptions.

The martial arts have students as young as 4 years of age. As Christian parents we are commanded by the Lord to fill the earth with children who will follow him in his ways of peace. We will be held accountable for our choices and actions, especially concerning children, as they are precious gifts from our Father.

As adults we seem to think we are immune to the dangers of the evil one's deceptions. Wrong. We're under constant attack as to weaken us into allowing sin that will lead to our children.

Occult teachings combined with physical blows, limb wrenching and serious maiming techniques are taught under the guise of "tradition" or the "art" of the system. I also recall the excuse, "We teach these techniques with control so we don't hurt each other." This may be true, but the fact is that they are taught and perfected through repetition to become "second nature." How can we as parents allow our precious children to learn these skills that are so openly taught to harm and kill? The violence must stop.

True self-defense doesn't need to be learned in a martial arts class. It is a quality gained by time and understanding.

Many have said that perhaps martial arts could be used to stop violent people from sinning against the Lord, victims and themselves. Use all the Christian terminology you wish but see the truth for what it is, a human justification for condoning evil.

From personal experience, the learning and practice of "basic" self-defense does lead to further progression into the philosophical and "self-reliant" physical aspects of the martial arts that are contrary to Christ's teachings. The student will go beyond the instructor's rhetoric, as I did, and delve deeper into the arts.

Peace and gentleness of spirit are the foundation to an ethical society. I am disturbed with the way our children and young people are growing up. We Christian parents need to engage our brains when making decisions regarding what we expose our children and ourselves to.

True self-defense doesn't need to be learned in a martial arts class. It is a quality gained by time and understanding. Through instruction and participation, parents and their faith in Christ should teach children the ideals held by the parent and family. This in turn will enhance children's inner self-defense mechanism, which will lead to a greater and more fulfilling life.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Is Anabaptism keeping us from being missional?**—Susan Biesecker-Mast
- **Dreaming of something better**—Carl Geissinger

Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

AMBS window

Fall 2006
Volume 17 Issue 1

② Congregation provides financial aid and scholarships for students
③ Many sources help students fund their study
④ President's Window

How students pay for it

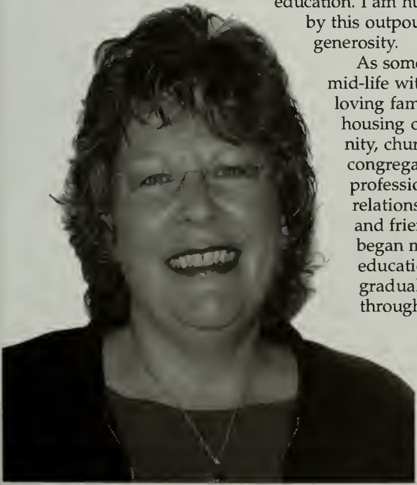
How to pay for seminary study is a question to which each student must find answers. Two messages are clear as students share their stories:

- **Assistance from congregations and conferences means more to students than only dollars; and**
- **Don't close the door of seminary study before you've explored all the possibilities.**

Paula Killough
Student from Seattle, Wash.

"Cloud of witnesses" or "living stones" —these are the Biblical images that come to mind as I reflect upon the individuals, congregations, and organizations who have surrounded me with support and encouragement. Through prayer, affirmation and financial assistance I have been provided with the sustenance needed to open doors for my full-time seminary education. I am humbled by this outpouring of generosity.

As someone in mid-life with a loving family, co-housing community, church congregation, professional relationships and friends, I began my education gradually through AMBS internet course offerings from my home in Seattle, Wash., in 2001. My congregation, Seattle Mennonite Church, offered financial support.



Later as I attended intensive summer courses on my "vacations" from work, a relationship of prayer and financial assistance with the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Men began. In 2004-05 I prayed for discernment as I struggled with the financial challenges of achieving seminary education and my certainty of call to pastoral ministry. More witnesses and living stones of faith came forward and provided many answers to the puzzling questions.

I am grateful to God for the opportunity to study full-time at AMBS. Abundance and generosity from witnesses and stones (plus student loans) have enabled me to look toward a bright future of ministry in God's church. May it be so. ●

Ryan Siemens
Student from Lethbridge, Alberta

In June 2005, Sandra, my wife, and I decided that I would study at AMBS; the only question was when. Our savings were meagre and due to visa restrictions, Sandra wouldn't be able to work in the U.S.

The choice was between going that fall or staying in Canada and working for another six months to build up the pot. When we were getting close to our "must-make-decision-soon"

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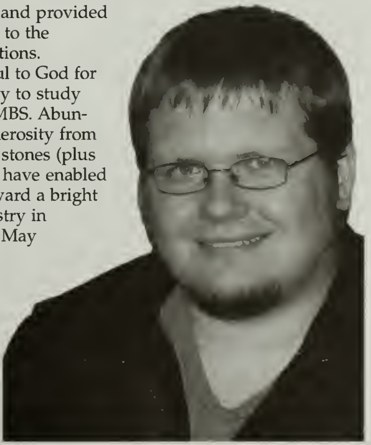


Congregation provides financial aid and scholarships for seminary students

"It's not hard to see that Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., is a congregation committed to education. The evidence ranges from the church's weekday preschool to the financial aid it provides for college and seminary students.

Currently there are 14 students—both college and seminary—receiving support through the congregation's Student Financial Aid Committee. Jon Brookmyer, a member of the committee who is an accountant, explained that the program was set up with care to comply with tax regulations. Funds come from three sources: a line item in the annual budget, earnings from an endowment and pledges.

The goal of the 250-member congregation is to pay ten percent of the tuition bill for each full-time student in a Mennonite college or seminary. Part-time seminary students receive a smaller percentage.

Christine Guth, member of Eighth Street and part-time student at AMBS, said, "I receive $250 a semester, but even if they gave me only $50, it would mean a lot, because it means congregation thinks I'm worth investing in to help me prepare for ministry."

Jon also said, "When we have a child dedication service, the pastors take the child down the center aisle into the midst of the congregation and we say 'We will help raise this child.'" He sees the assistance with the financial burden of college and seminary study as part of that commitment.

In addition to this program for members and children of members, the congregation also provides financial aid for international students at AMBS. The Mission and Service Commission of the congregation coordinates this aid and works with the seminary to identify one student each year to receive the aid.

Christine, who serves on the commission, says, "The congregation sometimes has to cut back in other areas, but we've never been asked to cut the budget for the Mission and Service Commission. We've been able to keep the support for international students steady, and even increase it a little."

Eileen Saner, AMBS librarian and director of educational resources, was on the commission when it began supporting an international student. At that time, an AMBS alumnus in Kenya had recommended a student to AMBS, but that person could not come without additional support. The commission decided to provide the support for that student, and the practice has continued for ten years.

Currently Fred Lesakale from Kenya is receiving the congregation's support. The congregation also has helped students from Ethiopia, Rwanda and Taiwan.

"Eighth Street has AMBS as a line item in its congregational budget along with other church schools," Eileen says, "and the financial aid is an additional kind of support that helps individual students." She also emphasizes that when the student who is receiving aid worships with the congregation and occasionally preaches and teaches, the congregation gets the benefit of learning to know more about the student and also about the worldwide church. ●

Two-thirds of AMBS graduates in 2006 reported incurring no new debt during their seminary study.

Source: Association of Theological Schools Graduating Student Questionnaire

Last fall, Christine Guth, student from Goshen, Ind., and the whole AMBS community celebrated AMBS Thanksgiving Day on October 19. That was not the national Thanksgiving holiday for either Canada or the U.S., although AMBS commemorates both.

Instead, AMBS Thanksgiving Day marks the day when 20 percent of the school year is completed, the portion of the year covered by the tuition students pay. The celebration included giving thanks to God for the support that comes from individuals, congregations, conferences and businesses for the remaining 80 percent of the school year income. Each student who receives financial aid is linked to the people who give the support, so the celebration provided an opportunity for students to write notes of thanks to these donors.

This fall, the seminary celebrates AMBS Thanksgiving Day on October 17.

Irene Koop, left, is the new AMBS director of financial aid. Samuel Voth Schrag, center, is a Master of Divinity student who has received the AMBS Church Leadership Award, a full-tuition scholarship. Regina Shands Stoltzfus, right, is AMBS director of admissions.

This fall, AMBS will provide almost $338,000 in scholarships and matching funds (grants that match congregational support for students). This amount is more than ten percent of the annual budget.

More than 20 percent of the AMBS annual fund represents scholarships and all forms of financial aid.

Many sources help students fund their study

by Regina Shands Stoltzfus, director of admissions

Financing a seminary education is not an impossible dream, but careful planning does have to happen. Most AMBS students receive some form of financial assistance; the more research and legwork a student is willing to put into the process, the greater the financial rewards are likely to be. All students who are admitted into a degree program are eligible.

Most AMBS financial aid is in the form of need-based grants. These funds are made available through the generous donations of AMBS supporters. Students apply for these funds by filling out the AMBS Financial Aid Application (U.S. students must also fill out the FAFSA—Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Applications should be submitted by May 1 for the following academic year.

Matching Grants

Admitted students who are enrolled full-time, and who receive financial support from their home congregations or conferences may participate in the matching grant program. AMBS will match $500 per semester, or $1,000 per year. A representative from the church or conference should submit a Matching Grant Commitment Form to the Financial Aid office by May 1.

Special Scholarships

The Church Leadership and Next Generation Awards are full-tuition scholarships for Mennonite students who demonstrate strong potential for leadership ministries in the church. Each year, this award is given to several students beginning masters programs. The awards provide full-tuition grants for up to three years provided the recipients continue full-time study. Some of the awards also include stipends for living expenses. Application must be made by March 15 of the year prior to beginning studies.

The Steiner Bivocational Scholarship assists students training for bivocational ministry, or pastors who combine congregational ministry with other work.

Multicultural Scholarships are available annually for North American students preparing to minister in a multiracial context, and who will contribute to the multicultural ethos of the church.

Mission-Evangelism Scholarships are available to international students who have a commitment to return to their home churches, and who have church agency support.

MCEC/AMBS Study Fund assists a pastor/student from the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada who needs approximately one year of residency to complete a degree.

Loans
While we encourage students to explore all other sources of funding before applying for a student loan, if need remains, a loan may help close the gap.

For Canadians only
Canadian students pay tuition costs at par. In addition, full-time students may exchange up to $1,200 at par each semester for living expenses. ●

Campaign Report

next Generation
AMBS Fund for Church Leadership

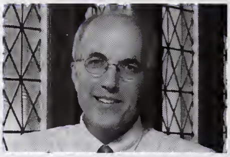
The current emphasis in the Next Generation campaign is to complete funding for the new AMBS library and campus center. To find out more, see **www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.**

	Goal	Received (US dollars) 9.30.06
Library and campus center	8,104,110	$6,627,935

President's Window

It is hard for me to imagine a vocation that could have enriched me spiritually and intellectually more than church leadership has done over the past twenty-five years. Seminary education prepared me for pastoral leadership in Vermont, missionary work in England, teaching on three continents, academic administration at AMBS, and a variety of writing assignments. I have had opportunity to work alongside gifted teachers, ministers, missionaries and lay people who taught me the joy of witness and service. I feel wealthy because the journey has been so rich.

But ministry is not a strategy for material wealth. So I am grateful that seminary education twenty-five years ago did not saddle me with large debt. Presbyterian donors—through contributions to their denominational seminary—largely paid for my doctoral studies. That freed this churchman to raise a family and serve with the Mennonite Church on a modest income.



Jesus himself "commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14). A strong denomination gives pastors and other leaders enough financial support so they are not preoccupied with making ends meet. A church with a future also helps fund training programs to prepare a new generation of leaders.

I thank God for people across the church who support AMBS, allowing us to offer financial aid and keep tuition low. No person gifted for ministry should avoid or delay seminary study because of cost. Congregations and conferences increasingly realize that their future depends in part upon having well-trained leaders who have a deep understanding of theology and Scripture.

If your congregation or conference does not have a plan for supporting persons in training for ministry, perhaps you can help make it happen. It might be your best investment in the future of your own faith community.

— J. Nelson Kraybill

Alumni News

Ed Nyce (Master of Divinity 1998) began a three-year term with Mennonite Central Committee as Iraq Program Manager in August 2006, based in Amman, Jordan.

Mona Sauder (Master of Divinity 2004) was ordained at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, on June 11, 2006.

Ed (Master of Divinity 1986) and **Kathrine** (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 1987) **Rempel** retired as conference ministers for Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference at the end of June 2006.

Fernando Enns is teaching at the University of Hamburg in Germany. He is director of the new Institute on Peace - Church - Theology. He writes, "This is the first chair ever for theology from a free church perspective within the theological faculty of a German University."

How students pay for it

Ryan Siemens

Continued from page 1

deadline we noticed an ad in the *Canadian Mennonite* for a Voluntary Service position at MennoHof in Shipshewana, Ind. So we contacted the director, Joe Yoder, and within five days it was confirmed that Sandra would do VS at MennoHof for one year and I would commute to AMBS. Our living expenses would be covered!

However, the financial support we received for studying at AMBS did not end there. We were very fortunate to receive financial aid from our home congregation, Lethbridge Mennonite Church, from the Provincial Conference, and from Mennonite Church Canada through Company of 1000. Along with AMBS financial aid, working on campus eight to 10 hours a week and our own savings, we were able fund our first year at AMBS.

You may ask, what about the second year? Well, first of all, we have received financial aid again from all these same organizations. The only change is that we have moved to campus where Sandra is now a VSer with AMBS, which means our housing expenses are again covered.

So if you are considering study at AMBS but are uncertain about funding, there are ways for it to happen. And if you are someone that has made a contribution to AMBS, or Company of 1000 or any of the other organizations that provide financial aid to students, thank you!! ●

Fall 2006
Volume 17 Issue 1

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos: Mary E. Klassen

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517-1999
574 295-3726
www.ambs.edu

Larry Miller named new MMA president

Mennonite Financial Credit Union CEO has 35 years of banking experience.

Larry D. Miller will become president of MMA early next year. The announcement of his appointment was made at MMA's headquarters in Goshen, Ind., on Oct. 30. Miller currently serves as president and CEO of Mennonite Financial Credit Union; its corporate headquarters are in Lancaster, Pa.

"Larry brings the best of church and the best of business to this role," said Pat Swartzendruber, chair of the MMA presidential succession committee.

MMA board chair Arlan Yoder said Miller would begin Jan. 21; the Millers will move to Goshen from their home in Mount Joy, Pa.

"Larry comes to us as a seasoned leader," Yoder, said, "a personable storyteller and an innovator. ... He has proven visionary CEO leadership, deep expertise in financial services and a commitment to the Anabaptist life and service of the church."

Miller, originally from Kalona, Iowa, has 35 years of experience in retail banking and the financial services industries. He was president and CEO of the Federal Land Bank Association from 1974 to 1985 and then vice president at Hawkeye Bank and Trust in Mount Pleasant, Ia., from 1985 to 1990. He joined MFCU as president and CEO in 1990, when its headquarters were in Scottdale, Pa. In 1998 he moved the credit union's headquarters to Lancaster, Pa. During his tenure, the credit union grew from $7 million to $75 million in assets and from 3,500 to 9,100 members. The credit union also has seven branch offices.

Miller's appointment focuses attention on the growing relationship between MMA and MFCU, especially since MMA has been looking for ways to expand into financial transaction services.

"MMA has been in discussion with Mennonite Financial Credit Union," Yoder said, "but we are not at a point we can make an announcement."

Miller said that a merger of the two organizations is not possible because MFCU is owned by its members.

"MMA and the credit union have found ways to work together," Miller said. "I hope that can continue."

Swartzendruber said the search committee's decision to tap Miller was independent from the conversations between MMA and MFCU.

Miller and his wife, Wilma, are members of Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church. He chairs the finance committee for Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference. He is also a member of Mennonite Central Committee's finance committee and serves as secretary-treasurer for *The Mennonite* magazine board. The Millers have two adult children.

Miller will succeed Steve Garboden, who has been serving as interim president for the past 13 months. Garboden will continue as vice president of health and administrative services.

After MMA's long-term president Howard Brenneman retired in June 2005, Skip Nagelvoort was named MMA's new president. But Nagelvoort resigned after three months when it was disclosed he had filed for personal bankruptcy protection shortly before his appointment (see "MMA's New Leader, Nagelvoort, Resigns," Oct. 21, 2005).

Swartzendruber said the most recent search process was different from the 2005 process. The committee was expanded to include additional representatives from Mennonite Church USA, and a leadership profile for the position of MMA president was developed only after polling 600 leaders. Swartzendruber said that at one time the committee had 54 candidates; a screening process reduced that number to 24, and 10 were selected for interviews. The search process concluded on Oct. 29, when Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board approved the MMA board's selection.

MMA, formerly known as Mennonite Mutual Aid, is the stewardship agency of Mennonite Church USA. It has 312 staff members and 105 counselors. MMA currently manages $1.6 billion in assets, primarily on behalf of individuals and institutions.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Larry Miller has proven visionary CEO leadership, deep expertise in financial services and a commitment to the Anabaptist life and service of the church.
—Arlan Yoder

MCC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Director, Human Resources
Director, Resource Generation Network

Join Mennonite Central Committee, the relief, development, peace and service agency of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Canada and the United States.

For a **job description** go to the urgent openings sidebar at mcc.org/serve. For a printed job description or application, **contact** Lowell Detweiler, MCC Human Resources, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501, and phone: (717) 859-1151, lcd@mcc.org.

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Hesston series engages young adults

A new generation of leaders describes the Mennonite church of their dreams.

Young adults and older adults joined to share their dreams for the Mennonite church as part of the 11th installment of the Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series, held Oct. 27-29 at Hesston (Kan.) College.

"Church in My Dreams: A New Generation Speaks Out" featured Tony Jones as the main speaker. Jones is a doctoral fellow and senior research fellow in practical theology at Princeton (N.J.) Theological Seminary. He is also the national coordinator for the Emerging Village, a network of innovative, missional Christians.

During his sessions, Jones spoke of postmodernism as the correct response for Christians in the 21st century who often hold several opposing views in tension. He said the church should be "distinctly and robustly Christian" as well as open to others.

He challenged Anabaptists to remain Anabaptist and "still have completely open dialogue with Calvinist just-war theorists," for example.

Jones said he sees the future Mennonite church needing to ask, What does it mean to be Mennonite into the future? With the international and cross-cultural experiences many Mennonite young people have today, they will inevitably bring back new ideas to the North American Mennonite church, he said.

"You don't get to be the pure German Mennonite anymore," Jones added.

Jones said he invites Anabaptists to see a "hybrid, eclectic Mennonite-Christian" as a positive idea, rather than something to be feared. "That would put [Anabaptists] three steps ahead of other faith groups," he said.

Jones predicted that Mennonites will look very different in 20 years. "We're not in a period of stasis; we're in a period of liminality," he said.

Hesston faculty member Michele Hershberger coordinated the conference. She said the purpose of the series is to emphasize practical ministry on a specific topic with an outside speaker.

This year, Hershberger wanted an open, honest and participatory process to engage young and older adults.

Participants raised $740 to help young adults attend Mennonite World Conference's Global Youth Summit in Paraguay in 2009.

Before and during the weekend, participants blogged on the Hesston College Web site, answering questions about their specific dreams for the church (see box below), described what passion in the church means and how to listen across generations. During worship times at the conference, PowerPoint slides showed comments from the blog for reflection.—*Anna Groff*

Young adults describe 'The church of my dreams'

Eight young adult leaders responded to the question, What is the church in my dreams? during the Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series at Hesston (Kan.) College Oct. 27-29 (see story above).

• Elizabeth Garza, from Brownsville, Texas, said she wants the church to further connect its members. Her dreams include intergenerational small groups and service projects.

• Sarah Thompson, who works at Mennonite Central Committee's Washington Office, described her experiences abroad—specifically at the 2003 Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe—and said the church of her dreams is a global church that is "mutually interdependent" and offers a "relevant and vulnerable community" for all people, not only those with power.

• Eric Miller, currently enrolled in the Pastoral Ministries Program at Hesston College, said truth is best discerned with community, as no individual or denomination is "smart enough to claim the whole truth." Miller invited Anabaptist groups to partner with other church denominations, if called to serve in that way.

• Karissa Miller, social work major at Hesston College, said the church of her dreams is a place of belonging that also acknowledges that "belonging" means different things to different people. She also wants the church to be a place to be open and, at times, disagree.

• Angie Lederach, a senior peace studies and anthropology major at Notre Dame University, South Bend, Ind., said the church of her dreams would "listen with respect for the things that have moved other generations" and voices from churches in the global South. She described "radical table fellowship" as a model for how to welcome the marginalized in society and "recognize how our lives are inextricably linked to others around us."

• Matt Troyer, a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., shared of his father's death from cancer and the process of anger, apathy and depression he faced before learning the importance of sharing painful stories.

• Christopher Erb, a student at the University of Cincinnati, spoke about the need for intellectual integrity and systems of accountability in church institutions. He said he wished he could have received all the facts about creation and evolution in his church and church school growing up. "We need education, not indoctrination," he said.

• Mark Horst, youth ministry and business major at Hesston (Kan.) College, spoke about churches as the body of Christ. He said that different churches have different callings and should support one another. Horst said the priority of the church should be to love God, not dispute about women in leadership and worship styles, for example.

Young adult event focuses on vocation

Bikemovement participants report on their conversations; new blog unveiled.

Many young adults left a retreat in South Bend, Ind., energized to continue church work and feeling reconnected to their peers in the church. Young Adult Fellowship, an organized partnership between young adults and young adult ministry in Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, sponsored the retreat held Oct. 20-22 at Camp Ray Bird.

Jill Swiers said the weekend reminded her of the community of young adult peers she has in the church, and the discussion and events exemplified who Mennonite young adults are.

Ken Hawkley, development director for Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, led the sessions. Hawkley worked with Mennonite young adults from 1989 to 2002 and previously served as a staff person for Mennonite Church USA. Hawkley's sessions focused on vocation and call.

"God does not ask us to solve problems but to be committed to God's agenda," Hawkley said. He used the examples of Jesus and Mother Teresa, who both started movements that grew and affected the whole world.

"Young people bring an energy and idealism that the church is not lost," he said. "They are invested in the church and they want to move it forward, not get rid of it."

Hawkley said he finds that young people wish to honor the past and partner with older adults.

Discussion focused on the participants' highest hopes for the church, including taking more risks for authentic hospitality, flexibility in how the church shows love and increased transparency within the church and church agencies.

The young adults also discussed the importance of listening to the older adults in the church. Shanda Hochstetler said that, at times, young adults should listen instead of talking to "honor the work being done."

Tamara Gill said young people need to realize that their ideas for the church are valuable and then embrace the responsibility for those ideas to become reality. "When we're willing to take initiative, [church leaders] will listen," Gill said.

Approximately 50 young adults from the United States and Canada participated in the weekend, which included 12 mostly young adult representatives from area conference offices, Mennonite Mission Network, Eastern Mennonite Missions and Mennonite Church Canada. Seven members from Bikemovement, a group of young adults that rode bicycles across the country last summer to engage conversation about the church, led a discussion and some activities to illustrate their experiences. David Landis said he heard varying responses from people this summer: Some feel comfortable asking any question in their churches and others feel there is an expectation not to ask certain questions. He said it's important to think creatively about "why we do church the way we do. Churches really want to hear from young adults and want to connect."

Anna Groff

Neal Friesen (left) and Peter Epp (right) watch Shanda Hochstetler make a sculpture out of pipe cleaners to represent the world's greatest need and a gift she can offer. The exercise was part of the Young Adult Gathering Oct. 20-22 in South Bend, Ind.

Tim Nafziger introduced the Young Anabaptist Radicals blog for self-proclaimed, young, radical Anabaptists. Nafziger, who worked previously with the Anabaptist Network in the United Kingdom, created the online space for people to discuss what it means to be an Anabaptist, particularly in terms of activism, political involvement and peacemaking. The site, young.anabaptistradicals.org, was launched at the end of August.

"I hope it continues to be a place for people to publicize things to a broader audience," Nafziger said. It's open to anyone who identifies as a young Anabaptist, he said.

During one session, Hawkley provided advice on how to form a personal "rule of life" that is an intentional plan to stay focused on a relationship with God, and to understand how that relates to an individual's vocation and calling.

Hawkley also had the young adults use clay and pipe cleaners to create two sculptures: one to represent the world's greatest need and the other to represent the gift each can offer the world.

The weekend closed with a time for young adults to come forward in groups of two to a table with water pitchers. They placed their sculptures on the table, poured a glass of water for one another and offered blessings to each other.—*Anna Groff*

This article is available as an audio file at www.The Mennonite.org

Leaders look at role of area conferences

Constituency Leaders Council also hears "power still exists for white males."

Gordon Houser

Gay Brunt Miller of Franconia Conference and Wayne Hochstetler of Illinois Conference discuss issues at the Constituency Leaders Council.

One year after calling for a task force to look at the role of area conferences in Mennonite Church USA, members of the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) heard and responded to a report from that task force. While mixed, the response was predominantly positive. The report and the responses now go to the denomination's Executive Board, which meets in January 2007.

Around 70 CLC members gathered Oct. 13-15 at the Lindenwood Retreat Center near Donaldson, Ind., primarily to consider the report.

The report proposed four sets of practices for conferences and for Executive Leadership and its agencies: structural alignment, relational alignment, financial alignment and communication.

While one role of conferences is to tend to the relationships of the church, they must collaborate with other parts of the church for this to be effective, the report said.

One of the structural recommendations in the report was to add a section to the bylaws that describes racial/ethnic groups. Graham Cyster, Lancaster, Pa., said that while he supports the idea, having racial/ethnic groups should be recognized as "a dysfunction … what the Bible calls a sin."

Cyster said it's like apartheid. If we have it in the bylaws, it should only be temporary; otherwise we could be institutionalizing racism. We should enlarge our vision and "go for the gold," he said. "We keep saying we're not there yet. Let's do something to get there."

The proposed relational alignment called for creating a CLC forum similar to the task force, that had 14 members and served as a place for candid discussion.

Some CLC members expressed caution. Some did not want it to be a regular group but ad hoc. Some questioned the extra cost—about $12,000 for the task force's three meetings, according to one member. Others wanted that kind of honest discussion to happen in CLC.

Task force chair Sue Biesecker-Mast said the size of a group affects the quality of the conversation; 70 people cannot do what 14 people can.

Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, said such a forum would be a helpful tool for Executive Leadership, though it would always go through CLC.

Yvonne Bailey, Hampton, Va., returned to an earlier topic.

"For six years we've been talking about racial/ethnic issues," she said, "but nothing has changed. Unless something changes we're going to lose people."

She lamented that power still exists with white males. The formation of another layer of bureaucracy "feels like the kind of sop we have come to expect from Washington," she said.

Earlier, other CLC members had called for concrete, measurable outcomes in the denomination's antiracism goals. Others called for greater attention to nurturing women in leadership.

> For six years we've been talking about racial/ethnic issues, but nothing has changed. Unless something changes, we're going to lose people.
> —Yvonne Bailey

The financial alignment section of the report stressed the desire that all parts of the church be "abundantly funded for the mandate that has been entrusted to them." It presented short- and long-term strategies that met general agreement, though no clear answers seemed evident.

The task force observed that "the various parts of the church are not communicating well enough." One area where there is a lack of clarity, said the report, is "who does or does not have direct access to congregations." The report offered strategies for improving communication from both executive leadership and its agencies and from the area conferences.

On its final day of meeting, CLC members responded in one of four ways to each part of the report: (1) I affirm; (2) I affirm with reservations; (3) I have reservations but I am willing to allow this to go forward; (4) I am not able to support this because … . Most received strong affirmation, yet three areas received more than one vote of opposition: (1) that CLC membership be revised to include representation from agencies and executive leadership ministries, (2) the creation of a CLC forum, (3) the financial strategies.

Now the Executive Board, which is to begin a six-year review of Mennonite Church USA in February 2007, will look at these responses and decide how to use them. The next CLC meeting is scheduled for March 22-24, 2007, in Excelsior Springs, Mo.—*Gordon Houser*

Global mission fellowship meets again

Network of Mennonite mission workers gathers in Kazakhstan in September.

Although Kazakhstan has not been the focus of mission efforts for any of the 42 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches, mission agencies assembled there Sept. 17-22 for the second meeting of the Global Mission Fellowship (GMF). Why Kazakhstan?

"GMF members had expressed a desire to hold their next meeting at a place of Mennonite involvement and of special mission interest," said Johannes Reimer of Germany, a member of the GMF planning committee who coordinated the complex event.

"Kazakhstan, with its history of Mennonite presence, is a unique mission frontier where Muslims are coming to Christ in unprecedented numbers," Reimer said. "Thirty-two of the 100 expatriate Christian workers in the country have Mennonite affiliation. Several of the GMF member agencies have workers in other Central Asian countries, but Kazakhstan is less restrictive and an exciting option for the GMF, even though we didn't have an official inviting agency or church."

Many GMF participants knew little about Central Asia and its 300 million people which stretch from Turkey to western China. Until 15 years ago it was a restricted area, but the church is growing at a rate of up to 30 percent each year.

On an exploratory trip, Reimer connected with the Kazakh Evangelical Alliance and the Turkish Kurultai, an association of Central Asian Turkic pastors. Both groups warmly welcomed the GMF and this opportunity to connect with the global church. They believed such a meeting would also give excellent visibility to the fledgling evangelical movement in Central Asia.

By invitation from the Kazakh Evangelical Alliance, this assembly that included 91 GMF participants from 36 countries, the Kurultai, and a Kazakh mission partnership, all came together in Kardjali, the "City of Apples."

Javier Soler, chair of the GMF, and Ahaman Egizbaev, president of the Evangelical Alliance of Kazakhstan, welcomed 3,000 guests to the opening rally at the Silk Road Vision Center in the Grace Church.

After a parade of flag-waving internationals, a 50-member Kazakh youth choir bedecked in sparkling blue and gold embroidered shirts led in worship. On the edge of the stage another group of youth worshiped with Kazakh dances.

In his opening address, Danisa Ndlovu, Zimbabwean vice president of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), said, "I used to associate missions with the west. But in this era, every congregation, no matter where it is—if it's part of the true church—should be involved in missions. We are all part of the emerging missions movement."

Wilbert Shenk, Anabaptist missiologist who recently retired from the Fuller School of Intercultural Studies in Pasadena, Calif., gave three addresses to the united assembly.

It was difficult to address such a mixed audience—one that ranged from highly educated missionaries and church leaders to semiliterate new Christians who did not even have the Scriptures in their own language. But Shenk worked hard to connect with his audience.

"I'm gratified to witness this upsurge in mission initiatives from the global South," Shenk said. "I hope that networking through GMF will help encourage sending international and intercultural teams into situations of interethnic conflict in which the gospel of reconciliation is desperately needed."

Three GMF participants—Ruben Dreidger from Uruguay, Rudolph Wiens from the United States and Alexander Neufeld from Germany—gave Bible studies on the book of Jonah.

Even though Wiens and Neufeld both spoke in Russian, young Turkish pastors thumbed vainly through their New Testaments trying to find "Jonah" because many of the Turkic languages do not yet have a translation of the Old Testament.

Leaders of the World Evangelical Fellowship and the European Evangelical Alliance each gave major addresses emphasizing the reality of the global body of Christ and the fact that the rest of the church is standing in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Central Asia, sharing in the fellowship of their sufferings.

Kazakhstan ... is a unique mission frontier where Muslims are coming to Christ in unprecedented numbers.—Johannes Reimer

A Kazakh Christian historian, Bayeke Manarbek, introduced a new book in which he is reconstructing the Christian heritage of the Kazakh people. He said that the Parthians, present on the day of Pentecost, first brought the gospel to Central Asia, where there was a strong church until it was decimated by Tamerlane in the 15th century.

"Because of the Arab and Russian empires we have forgotten our Christian roots," Manarbek said. "But since 1990, these ancient roots are giving birth to new trees. We Christians came alive through the prayers of our ancestors and your prayers. God is calling us to again take the gospel along the length and breadth of the Silk Road."

—Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions for Global Mission Fellowship

Pot holders carry prayers to Bulgaria

Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church sewing circle made 126 for missions.

Lamar Myers

Eastern Mennonite Missions worker Pat Myers, left, shares pot holders with Tanka, Mimi and Tinka, women in southern Bulgaria. The Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church sewing circle made the pot holders as gifts for women in Bulgaria.

Since coming to Bulgaria earlier this year, Eastern Mennonite Missions workers Lamar and Pat Myers have been visiting Turkish, Bulgarian and Gypsy villages outside Kardjali in southern Bulgaria. They serve on outreach teams with Bulgarian pastor Hari Atanasov and other members of his congregation.

"We are amazed by the openness we see," Lamar says. "On our first visit to Vishigrad we met about a dozen Christians who wanted to get together to pray. We were struck by the peace and joy on the face of the woman in whose home we met—in stark contrast to many others. This group is mainly women and children because the husbands are away, employed in larger towns because of lack of work in the area."

Atanasov noted that it is easy to get groups started but that he doesn't have time to maintain all of them. Currently the team is working with 15 different groups of believers. In one village where Atanasov distributed Christian literature two years ago, he learned that several people had become Christians and wanted follow-up.

Either the door will swing into Bulgaria and Islam will become stronger in Europe, or the door will swing into Turkey and the gospel will bring hope, peace and salvation.

On a recent visit a mission team made to Devisilovo, near the Greek border, they started at the mayor's office, renewing friendships from last summer, when the Song for the Nations choir, led by Pat, gave a joint concert with their folk choir. On this visit, the Bulgarian choir director, who is a follower of Jesus, called many of the Christians in the village together for a time of fellowship.

In the Gypsy village of Voivodovo, a woman had been hosting a small group of believers in her home for a time of worship—until the leader of the local mosque warned her to stop.

"She stopped for a while," Lamar says, "but the group wants to start meeting again. Twenty crowded into a 10- by 10-foot room on our first visit. Pat taught the children a song in Bulgarian, and they sang for us in their Gypsy language. On our next visit, there were 40 in the room, overflowing into the hallway. Several in the group have asked for baptism."

Lamar says the Christians in Bulgaria feel an urgency to reach out with the gospel.

"One put it this way," Lamar says: "'There is a swinging door between Turkey and Bulgaria. Either the door will swing into Bulgaria and Islam will become stronger in Europe, or the door will swing into Turkey and the gospel will bring hope, peace and salvation there.'"

As they continue to learn the Bulgarian language and join the village visitation team, Pat had an idea about how to link her home village of Landisville, Pa., more closely to the villagers.

"It's the Bulgarian custom to always take along a small gift when you visit," Myers says. "I wondered if the ladies at Landisville Mennonite, our home church, would consider making pot holders for us to take along as hostess gifts. While the Americans are making the pot holders, they can be praying for the Bulgarians who will be receiving them. When we give the pot holders to people here, we can say they are symbols of love and prayer from the women in our home church."

Joan Gingrich, president of the sewing circle at Landisville Mennonite Church, loved the idea and took it to the circle.

By the time Myers returned to Bulgaria after their visit to the United States this summer they had a suitcase full of 126 handmade, prayed-over pot holders. The pot holders were crocheted, quilted, knitted, appliquéd and sewed. Several young girls even made old-fashioned woven loop pot holders. Pat had noted that Bulgarians especially love orange, yellow, red and brown, so some women focused on those colors.

"We know the harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few," Pat says, "but we're grateful to see that the Lord of the harvest is mobilizing workers in Bulgaria and in Landisville."—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

RAD teams bring love and reconciliation

Young adult participants mix outreach and service with spiritual disciplines.

Nate Kelly breezes into Teen Town, letting the door shut out the Windy City's chilly fall air. Inside music is blaring, and teens are busy playing pool or doing homework in the computer lab.

Kelly fits in here—a white guy from a small town in Indiana in an African-American Chicago neighborhood. He knows the routine because he spent most of his growing up years hanging out in a similar after-school drop-in center in New Haven, Ind.

Ever since the RAD (Reaching and Discipling) program started in 1998, Kelly spent his afternoons hanging out at the Power House in New Haven where RAD participants served while training for longer outreach elsewhere. Though the volunteers changed every few months, they had a positive effect on his life.

"The staff were people I could look up to—a Christian influence," Kelly says. He grew up going to church, but that extra dose of care during the week "kept me off the streets."

That influence is also what landed him in RAD. He knew about the program but was hesitant to train down the street from his mom's house. RAD's move to Chicago this fall was the perfect opportunity for Kelly.

Just a few blocks away from Teen Town, Leah Yoder spends her afternoon grocery shopping. Only she isn't putting things in her cart for the RAD house. At Vital Bridges, where RAD participants are weekly volunteers, groceries are bagged for low-income community members who have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.

"Did you ever play store when you were little? It's like that," Yoder says. Clients fill out a grocery list and volunteers fill up the cart for them. Yoder passes bags of frozen chicken, bananas, onions, shampoo and breakfast cereal across the counter and exchanges smiles with clients.

She feels a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day, knowing some vital needs have been met.

Darrell Gascho, RAD director, says these service placements are crucial to the program.

"If we really believe Christians are to be about bringing God's love and reconciliation to all of creation," Gascho says, "faith formation needs to put that service component into practice."

Besides their service placements, RAD participants have spent a good deal of their training time focusing on their relationship with God through Jesus.

Learning about Scripture from an Anabaptist perspective, worshiping, practicing spiritual disciplines and meeting weekly with a mentor have all helped the six young adults grow in preparation for further outreach.

On Oct. 21, the participants were commissioned for international service at First Church of the Brethren (next door to the training center). Both teams will work with long-term mission workers to support the ministries of local congregations.

—Bethany Keener of Mennonite Mission Network

From left, Nate Kelly, Zoikee Barfield and others prepare to untie their human knot.

2006-2007 RAD* teams

Gama, Brazil

- **Cyrus Franklin, Calvary Chapel, Modesto, Calif.**
- **Jordan Reynolds, West Missionary Church, Berne, Ind.**

Choele Choel, Argentina

- **Nate Kelly, Vineyard Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.**
- **Andrea Kraybill. Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.**
- **Kevin Roth, Millersburg (Ohio) Mennonite Church**
- **Leah Yoder, Roanoke Mennonite Church, Eureka, Ill.**

***Reaching and Discipling**

Goshen College gets $12.5 million grant

The largest grant in school history will help campus educate local Latinos.

On Oct. 25, Goshen (Ind.) College unveiled a comprehensive plan to increase access for regional Latino and other minority students. What Goshen learns from the new program will be disseminated to other colleges and communities in similar demographic circumstances.

A new Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning on the Goshen College campus will be funded by Lilly Endowment with a $12.5 million grant—the largest single grant Goshen College has ever received.

The center will focus on three areas: researching the resources and challenges that changing demographics bring to a rural Midwest community and to higher education, creating an intercultural learning environment to benefit all students and strengthening current efforts in recruiting and retaining regional Latino and other minority students.

"The exponential power of this grant and program is for the research and information to be shared on the national stage," president James Brenneman said in announcing the gift. "Goshen College is excited about creating additional opportunities to better partner with students able to succeed in college if given the opportunity. We are determined to make this program successful, and the gift from Lilly Endowment will help us create a brighter future for this diverse community."

Brenneman also said that Goshen College will continue to honor the "values, tradition and mission as a Mennonite institution of academic excellence while we serve all students from this region and beyond."

We hear time and time again of their desires to engage new immigrant populations in higher education and community life.—Sara B. Cobb, Lilly Endowment

Goshen College suggested to Lilly Endowment this plan of creating a center that addresses the needs of the college, the community and higher education.

"From our colleagues in education and community development around the state, we hear time and time again of their desires to engage new immigrant populations in higher education and community life," said Sara B. Cobb, Lilly Endowment vice president for education. "With its tenet of welcoming the newcomer and its legacy of excellence in education and community service, Goshen College is well suited to launch this new center. It will benefit not only Goshen students and communities in northern Indiana, but through research and dissemination efforts it also should help colleges and communities throughout the country in enhancing their efforts to reach out to Latino and other minority students."

Brenneman

Minority enrollment in northern Indiana schools has grown dramatically. For example, in Goshen public schools it has grown fivefold—from 8 percent to 41 percent—since 1990. Statewide, research shows minority enrollment in Indiana's public schools has grown almost 9 percent in that same period, but minority enrollment in Indiana's colleges increased 2 percent during the same time.

Latinos and other minorities have been drawn to areas such as northern Indiana by increased employment opportunities in industry and agriculture. Other Midwest communities with small liberal arts colleges have large and growing Latino populations.

Plans call for the new center to be created early next year and include hiring a staff, establishing scholarships, recruiting a minority cohort for enrollment in the fall of 2007, providing cultural programming for the campus, addressing student support services, reaching into the local Latino community and offering opportunities for current faculty to learn Spanish.

Other possibilities include collaborative faculty-student research, a "bridge" program to assist minority students in preparation for college, partnerships with other colleges and universities and the local public schools, recruitment of Latino and other minority faculty and assessment of the college's academic curriculum.

Goshen College launched in 1968 a pioneer study abroad program called Study-Service Term (SST). Since then, about 80 percent of Goshen students have spent a semester abroad in a developing nation immersing themselves in the country's language and culture and performing volunteer service.

Goshen was one of the first colleges in the nation to require an international education component in its curriculum, and it is the college's experience with this program that is the foundation for the new center.

"Given recent trends in regional demographic cultural growth, bringing the institutional vision of global citizenship closer to home makes sense at this time," said Brenneman.—*Jodi H. Beyeler of Goshen College*

John Sharp

This 2004 group worshiped in the cave in Switzerland's Emmental region where Anabaptists met in secret. It is close to Joder Hill, the origin of Amish and Mennonite Yoders. This cave was not known to North Americans before 2003.

Swiss plan special 'Anabaptists Year'

"Täuferjahr 2007" will culminate with international days July 26-29.

The Mennonite churches of Switzerland will welcome Mennonites from around the world to remember Anabaptist and Swiss roots in 2007. Church leaders, historians, genealogists, culture folks and tourism officials are planning features throughout the year, highlighted by "international days" July 26-29.

The planning for Täuferjahr 2007—loosely translated as "Anabaptists Year 2007"—is a response to recent interest among Christians outside Anabaptist circles in Europe. For most of the Swiss Mennonite congregations this interest was quite a surprise. An early indication of this interest was the response following the publication of Katharina Zimmerman's novel *Die Furgge* in 1989. But the interest began in earnest in 2003 with reconciliation conferences, day-long meetings and the dedication of memorial plaques.

The Winterthur Reconciliation Conference in May 2003 was followed by the inauguration of a memorial stone close to Schleitheim in March 2004, a Reformed/Anabaptist Day of Reconciliation Gathering in Zurich in June 2004, a memorial service in the Münster cathedral in Bern in April 2005 and another reconciliation conference in New Holland, Pa., in April 2005.

Peter von Gunten's 2005 documentary film *Im Leben und über das Leben hinaus*, which he filmed among Mennonites in the Jura and in the United States, is still in demand in Swiss movie theaters today. In the summer of 2005 the play "Die Täuferjagd" ("The Täufer Hunt") appeared and played for weeks on the Moosegg in Langnau.

Christians from churches that had previously discriminated against Anabaptists—and even persecuted them—sought dialogue with present-day Mennonites as the heirs of the earlier Anabaptist movement. The motives were different, but the result was always discussion and working out of the painful history and previous injustices, as well as discussion of present-day theological positions and a common Christian witness.—*adapted from an article by Hanspeter Jecker*

Emmental Mennonite congregation in Langnau, Switzerland , is one of the oldest continuously operating Mennonite congregations. The congregation began meeting ca. 1530.

RESOURCES

Even the Demons Submit: Continuing Jesus' Ministry of Deliverance, edited by Loren L. Johns and James R. Krabill (Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2006, $15.95), includes essays from deliverance ministers, psychologists, pastors, biblical scholars, missiologists, anthropologists and people who have experienced deliverance and healing. The diversity of the book is an attempt to honor the complexity of the issue.

The Tax Dilemma: Praying for Peace, Paying for War by Donald D. Kaufman (Wipf & Stock, 2006, $14) is of one of the most complete treatments of the war tax issue. This updated and enhanced edition includes insights from 42 writers. All royalties from the book are being donated to the Peace Tax Foundation.

The Quilting Path: A Guide to Spiritual Discovery Through Fabric, Thread and Kabbalah by Michael J. Caduto (SkyLight Paths, 2006, $16.99) helps make quilting a meditative and contemplative practice that helps strengthen our spirituality.

God With Us Today: Devotions for Families by June Galle Krehbiel (Faith and Life Resources, 2006, $12.99) invites families to share devotions at home. Each of the 100 readings includes a brief meditation on a Scripture passage as well as a prayer and questions to help families worship God. With the devotionals are poems, proverbs, quotations, word puzzles, song lyrics and simple facts to help children and adults better understand the Bible and our world.

What About Hitler? Wrestling with Jesus' Call to Nonviolence in an Evil World by Robert W. Brimlow (Brazos Press, 2006, $19.99) is an honest examination of the most important challenge to pacifism: Would it not be right to use violence to stop great evil, such as that unleashed on the world by Hitler? His answers are profound in their simplicity and honesty.

Post-Modernism 101: A First Course for the Curious Christian by Heath White (Brazos Press, 2006, $17.99) takes a difficult subject and makes it easy to understand without being simplistic. This book will help all who want to know why they should be interested in the postmodern situation.

TheThoughtfulChristian.com is an online resource center for adult study materials. The studies are grouped in five categories: Bible and theology, spirituality, Christian living, contemporary issues and popular culture. The studies can be purchased individually (a one-session study is $5, a two-session $9, three-session $12, and each additional session above three is $3 more); in a study pack of five units of any length for $35; or as a 12-month subscription for $250 and including as many studies as you want to download, whenever you want. Go to TheThoughtfulChristian.com or email feedback@thoughtfulchristian.com.

From Fantasy to Faith: Morality, Religion and 20th-Century Literature by D.Z. Phillips (SCM Press, 2006, $26.99) includes 21 essays on modern writers. He shows how religion engages fully with pain and loss and emptiness as it is expressed by the great literary artists of the 20th century.

A Gentle Wind of God: The Influence of the East Africa Revival by Richard K. MacMaster with Donald R. Jacobs (Herald Press, 2006, $16.99) shows how missionaries sent to East Africa returned to North America with a new vision of revival: Walk with Jesus Christ and allow nothing to disturb that relationship. Call sin sin and repent of it quickly, they proclaimed. Then enjoy the infusion of the Holy Spirit in all of life.

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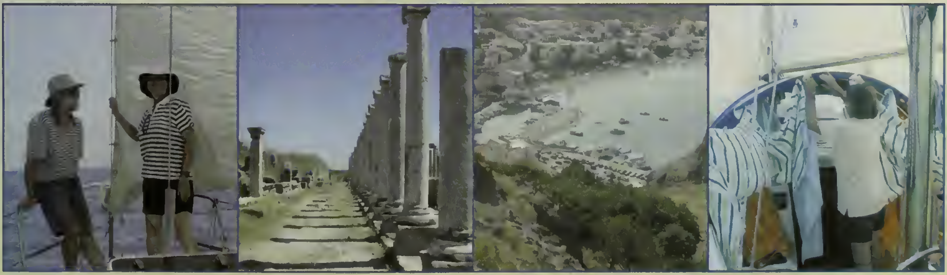

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CALENDAR

Elizabethtown College's Donald B. Kraybill and co-author James P. Hurd of Minnesota's Bethel University will discuss their recently published book, "***Horse-and-Buggy Mennonites: Hoofbeats of Humility in a Postmodern World***," at 7:30 p.m., Nov. 9, at the **Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies**. The talk is free of charge. Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA 17022. For more information email dolheimerm@etown.edu or call 717-361-1587.

A "***town meeting***" will be held Saturday, Nov. 11, 2:30 pm, at the **Linville Creek Church of the Brethren**, Brethren Road, Broadway, Va., to pursue purchase and preservation of the historic John Kline property located beside the new Broadway High School. It is open to anyone interested.

Keith Brintzenhoff, musician and folklorist from Kutztown, Pa., will give a program at the **Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Historical Society**, 2215 Millstream Rd., on Wed., Nov. 15 at 7 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif., *centennial celebration*, Nov. 17-19. Everyone is welcome, but reservations are required. Contact the church office (559-638-2917) to make dinner reservations or request a copy of the centennial book. See also www.fmcreedley.org for details.

CrossRoads is sponsoring a ***tour of four historic homes and the Beaver Creek Church of the Brethren***, all in the Dayton (Va.) area, on Sat., Nov. 18, 10 a.m. till 3 p.m. Refreshments and rest rooms are being provided by the Dayton Church of the Brethren. Tickets are $15 in advance, $20 at the door. Contact CrossRoads (540-438-1275) for more information.

WORKERS

Buckwalter, Kyle D., was installed as lead pastor at Crossroads Community Fellowship, Lititz, Pa., on Aug. 27.

Ernest, Dennis W., was installed as lead pastor at Rohrerstown Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Aug. 13.

Fisher Fast, Melissa, was licensed as pastor at Sunnyside Mennonite, Elkhart, Ind., on Oct. 8.

Godshall, Susan, was licensed as chaplain for Lancaster General Hospital at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Sept. 1.

Horning, Nevin S., was ordained as associate pastor at Metzler Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa., on Aug. 27.

OKanya, Nelson, was licensed as associate pastor at Capital Christian Fellowship, Lanham, Md., on Aug. 13.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Armstrong, Shawn Micah, Sept. 14, to John and Pam Garber Armstrong, Eureka, Ill.

Cline, Alex Cayman, Oct. 12, to Eric and Sandra Wenger Cline, Harrisonburg, Va.

Diller, Abigail Rose, Aug. 23, to Andrew and Sherry Worstine Diller, Dunkirk, Ohio.

Dufallo, Leah Joy, Aug. 22, to Neil and Amy Kauffman Dufallo, New York, N.Y.

Emery, Brianna Noelle, Oct. 6, to Neil and Jami Sellars Emery, Macungie, Pa.

Frankenfield, Leah Jun, Sept. 13, to James and Carole Frankenfield, Sellersville, Pa.

Friesen, Caleb Paul Sawatzky, Sept. 23, to Reynold Friesen and Tammy Sawatzky, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Goerzen, Jacob Simon, Sept. 25, to John and Terah Goerzen, Newton, Kan.

Hurst, Hunter Levi, Oct. 5, to Troy and Trina Minnich Hurst, Lancaster, Pa.

Lehman, Cormac Arthur Rhodes, Sept. 29, to Bradley Lehman and Gloria Rhodes, Harrisonburg, Va.

Luitjens, Keiran Josiah, Oct. 14, to Nathan and Rachelle Patmore Luitjens, Wayland, Iowa.

Meyer, Aubrey Roush, Sept. 15, to Brian and Andrea Roush Meyer, Riverside, Iowa.

Norbo, Connor Jason, Oct. 4, to Jason and Alysha Blosser Norbo, Salem, Ohio.

Olmstead, Isaiah David, Oct. 7, to Nathan and Denise Hoover Olmstead, Croghan, N.Y.

Pullman, Clare Francis, Sept. 28, to Kevin and Abby Dillon Pullman, Lino Lakes, Minn.

Shenk, Amber Nicole, Oct. 13, to Jeromy and Katrina Good Shenk, Manheim, Pa.

Swartley, Hayden Vernon, Aug. 25, to Timothy V. and Cheryl Brubaker Swartley, Sellersville, Pa.

Troyer, Zachary Clement, Sept. 19, to Anthony and Angela Wise Troyer, North Canton, Ohio.

Walther, Kyle Elliott, Oct. 1, to Ike and Janelle Riegsecker Walther, Jones, Mich.

Waltner, Ella Ruth, Sept 17, to Jeremy and Stacey Kramer Waltner, Freeman, S.D.

Weaver, Bryce Drew, Sept. 28, to Lyle and Carla Kennel Weaver, Goshen, Ind.

Weishaupt, Isaiah Michael, Sept. 28, to Jonathan and Aimee Janssen Weishaupt, Goshen, Ind.

Zehr, Nicholas James, born July 4, received for adoption Aug. 31 by Darrell and Sheila Myers Zehr, Philadelphia, Miss.

Zuercher, Zoey Elizabeth, Sept. 9, to Jordan and Audrey Shoup Zuercher, Dalton, Ohio.

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MARRIAGES

Baker/Martin: Andrea Baker, St. Jacobs, Ont., and Lance Martin, Elmira, Ont., Oct. 14 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Barth/Ressler: Sarah Barth, South Bend, Ind., and Derek Ressler, South Bend, Sept. 23 at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend.

Caban/Tamayo: Lisa Caban, Philadelphia, Pa., and Angel Tamayo, Philadelphia, Sept. 30 at Nueva Vida Norristown New Life, Norristown, Pa.

Cherkala/King: Brent Cherkala and Julie King, Mogadore, Ohio, Sept. 23 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Clemmer/Senko: Evan Clemmer, Telford, Pa., and Jane Senko, Pennsburg, Pa., Oct. 7 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Godfrey/Harder: Steven Godfrey, Shoreview, Minn., and Marcella Harder, St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 9 at the lakeside, Fifty Lakes, Minn.

Hartman/Skaja: Sabrina Hartman, Elida, Ohio, and Phillip Skaja, Elida, Oct. 14 at Lima (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Hershey/Norman: Eric Hershey, Northern, Pa., and Erin Norman, Del., Oct. 15 at Stumptown Mennonite, Bird-in-Hand, Pa.

Kauffman/Unzicker: Harold Kauffman, Champaign, Ill, and Elaine Unzicker, Goshen, Ind., Oct. 1 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kennell/Peters: Anna Kennell, Roanoke, Ill., and Kevin Peters, Washington, Ill., Sept. 1 at Roanoke Mennonite Church, Eureka, Ill.

Mayberry/Pavie: Richard Mayberry, Souderton, Pa., and Erin Pavie, Sellersville, Pa., Sept. 30 at Towamencin Mennonite Church, Kulpsville, Pa.

Waldeck/Wengerd: John Waldeck and Kristy Wengerd, Hartville, Ohio, Sept. 23 at Church of the Savior United Methodist Church, Canton, Ohio.

DEATHS

Albrecht, Glendon A., 96, Flanagan, Ill., died Sept. 29 of heart congestion. Spouse: Frances P. Ummel Albrecht. Parents: Samuel and Ida Yordy Albrecht. Children: Donald, Roger; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 3 at Prairieview Mennonite Church, Flanagan.

August, Mary Ellen Nissley, 51, Battle Ground, Ind., died July 23 of cardiomyopathy related to myotonic dystrophy. Spouse: Stephen Thomas August. Parents: Clayton and Vera Becker Nissley. Child: Kristin August. Funeral: July 29 at Erisman Mennonite, Manheim, Pa.

Bauman, E. Blanche Fellenbaum, 73, Millersville, Pa., died Oct. 13 of leukemia. Spouse: Alvin H. Bauman. Parents: Clyde and Edna Hilton Fellenbaum. Children: Jay P., A. Lamar, C. Verlan, S. Kevin, E. Jeanette, Laurie S., E. Jewelene; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 18 at Masonville Mennonite Church, Washington Boro, Pa.

Bollinger, Paul Steven, 80, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 21. Spouse: Janet Wenger Bollinger. Parents: Edward and Sara Bumbaugh Bollinger. Children: Phyllis Branner, Gail Anderson, Joetta Waring, Steven, Michael, Edward; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 24 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Cober, Donald, 84, Floradale, Ont., died Sept. 8. Spouse: Kathleen Cober. Parents: Russell and Roxie Cober. Children: Douglas, Dale, Diane Milson, Darrell, Donna Yemen; seven grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; three step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 12 at Fordwich Brethren in Christ Church.

Detwiler, Ralph E., 90, Hesston, Kan., died Oct. 18. Spouse: Verna Miller Detwiler (deceased). Parents: Noah and Orpha Fortner Detwiler. Children: Phyllis Yoder, Glenford, Bell Duerksen, Luann Goertzen, Don; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Ebersole, Linda M. Hershey, 53, Lancaster, Pa., died Oct. 11 of cancer. Spouse: Jay D. Ebersole. Parents: J. Eby and Kathryn Souder Hershey. Children: Rosalyn Gehman, Randall, Ryan; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand, Pa.

Godshall, Leroy G., 87, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 2. Spouse: Rachel Detweiler Godshall. Parents: Samuel and Mary Godshall. Children: Beverly Leatherman, Sharon Swartley, Stanton, Charles; 17 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 5 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Groff, Richard S., 88, Ephrata, Pa., died Sept. 15. Spouse: Marcella G. Groff (deceased). Parents: Henry and Ella Stoner Groff. Children: Sara Jane Landis, Shirley Groff, Jean Krause; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 20 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

Histand, Eunice Gingerich, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 29. Spouse: Nelson W. Histand (deceased). Parents: Amos and Nannie Yoder Gingerich. Children: Marian Schwabbauer, Carol Lehman, Delores Friesen, Catherine Lichti, John, Timothy, Stan, James; 26 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 5 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Hostetler, Dorothy Mast, 83, Newcomerstown, Ohio, died Oct. 16. Spouse: Phillip E. Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Emery and Clara Gerber Mast. Children: Phyllis Bussard, Teresa Wright, Jeffrey, Edwin; 12 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 19 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek, Ohio.

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ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 11-23)
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LANDS of the BIBLE (September 26 - October 8)
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2008 TOURS

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"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

Jantzen, Martha R. Holland, 81, Beatrice, Neb., died Oct. 3. Spouse: Herbert J. Jantzen (deceased). Parents: Frank and Stella Mae Amerson Holland. Funeral: Oct. 6 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, Neb.

Lehrman, Evelyn Schmidt, 80, Goessel, Kan., died Sept. 23 of cancer. Spouse: Orie Lehrman (deceased). Parents: Abram and Sara Schmidt. Children: Kaye Klassen, Verney, Jerry; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 26 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Lichty, Elvina Bowman, 84, Elmira, Ont., died Oct. 9 of a stroke. Spouse: Edwin M Lichty (deceased). Parents: Henry and Hannah Weber Bowman. Children: John, Mary Ann Brubacher, Erma Kufske, Willard, Margaret Berg; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 12 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Mark, Richard, 73, Elkhart, Ind., died Oct. 1. Spouse: Ruth Litwiller Mark. Parents: Albert and Vivian Viel Mark. Children: Jeffery, Wesley, James, Wayne; six grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 4 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Mecum, Joyce Comardelle, 70, Des Allemands, La., died Sept. 29 of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Spouse: Stanford J. Mecum. Parents: Camille and Corinne Dufrene Comardelle. Children: Sharon M. Cortez, Steven B.; four grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 2 at Des Allemands Mennonite Church.

Miller, Elsie L. Selzer, 86, Hesston, Kan., died Oct. 16. Spouse: Ezra Miller (deceased). Parents: Edward and Lorena Neuschwanger Selzer. Children: Dan; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 20 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Moyer, Anna Delp, 87, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 11. Spouse: Preston F. Moyer. Parents: Charles and Annie Price Delp. Children: Esther Hedrick, P. Lowell, Dennis; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at Souderton Mennonite Community.

Myers, Emerson K., 85, Souderton, Pa., died Sept. 25. Spouse: Pearl Long Myers. Parents: Clarence and Emma Keeler Myers. Children: Philip Dean, Lorene; three grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 29 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Oyer, Elsie Katherine, 92, Dewey, Ill., died Oct. 6. Parents: Manuel and Elizabeth Baecher Oyer. Funeral: Oct. 9 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Steiner, Arlene Amstutz, 90, Orrville, Ohio, died Sept. 27 after a period of declining health. Spouse: Glenn L. Schrock (deceased); Ross L. Gerber (deceased), Rev. James A. Steiner (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Fannie Zaugg Amstutz. Children: James L. Schrock, Philip Schrock, Nancy Conrad, David Gerber, Daniel Gerber, Dwight Gerber, Amy Kauffman, Geneva Smucker, Dr. Gerald Steiner, Eleanor Yoder, Marilyn Eigsti; 29 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 30 at Orrville Mennonite Church.

Schmidt, Milton, 85, Goessel, Kan., died Sept. 19 of a stroke. Spouse: Selma Fast Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Cornelius and Katharina Voth Schmidt. Children: Barbara Unruh, Linda Gerber, Patricia Snyder, Kathy Voth; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 22 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Schmucker, Donald Wayne, 71, Pine Grove, Pa., died Sept. 10 of acute myelogenous leukemia. Spouse: Dorothy Kathryn Shaffer Schmucker. Parents: Adam and Effie Picha Schmucker. Children: Laura Voyenski, Wayne. Funeral: Sept. 15 at Roedersville Mennonite, Pine Grove.

Troyer, John Mast, 80, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 27. Spouse: Amy Lorraine Hertzler Troyer. Parents: Herbert N. and Sadie Mast Troyer. Children: Rose Marie Troyer, John Terry, Herbert N., John Mark; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 1 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Stoltzfus, Doris C. Clemmer, 69, Douglasville, Pa., died Sept. 15. Spouse: Leonard G. Stoltzfus. Parents: Joseph and Edith Alderfer Clemmer. Funeral: Sept. 20 at Oley Mennonite Church, Oley, Pa.

Wiens, Mary Kroeker, 90, Inman, Kan., died Sept. 10. Spouse: Menno Wiens (deceased). Children: Mark, Dennis, Darrel, Fred, Sheryl; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 16 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Harry V., 98, LaGrange, Ind., died Oct. 7. Spouse: Grace Schrock Yoder (deceased). Parents: Lee and Lizzie Schrock Yoder. Children: Shirley Miller, Carolyn Waters, Roger, Raymond, Stanley; 15 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 11 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Yoder, Marie Rupp, 79, Aurora, Ohio, died Sept. 10 of pneumonia. Spouse: Nolan Yoder. Parents: Ira and Sarah Rupp. Children: Marla Yoder-Tiedt, Tim (deceased), Karen Hennen (deceased); four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 12 at Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Stanley "Pete," 86, West Liberty, Ohio, died Sept. 7. Spouse: Helen Hostetler Yoder. Parents: Floyd and Kathryn Plank Yoder. Children: Sherril Walters, Janet Mally, Penny Frey, Steven, Barbara Heath, Dianne Jensen, Tom; 19 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

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Franklin Mennonite Conference is accepting applications until Nov. 30 for a ***half-time minister for youth and young adults***. FMC is comprised of 14 congregations located in south-central Pennsylvania and northern Maryland. For further information contact Darrell Baer at 717-375-4544 or frmc@earthlink.net.

Quakertown Christian School needs the following:

Administrator for preschool-grade 8 school; responsible for the overall operation of the ministry. Candidates should have five years K-8 teaching experience; master's degree; Pennsylvania administrative certification or willingness to pursue certification.

Director of development to serve as member of administrative team and be responsible for providing overall leadership in all areas of fund-raising and public relations. Send or email resumé to: Patricia A. Roberts, Quakertown Christian School, 50 East Paletown Road, Quakertown, PA 18951; paroberts@quakertownchristian.org.

Hesston College, the two-year college of Mennonite Church USA, is accepting applications for ***vice president of academics***. Qualifications include commitment to Anabaptist distinctives and to the mission of Hesston College, completed doctorate and demonstrated ability to lead collaboratively with faculty and other areas of campus. Beginning date: July 1, 2007. Review of applications and interviews will continue until position is filled. Send letter of application, vita and original transcripts to: President's Office, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062.

Vice president health services: **Fairmount Homes** in Ephrata, Pa., seeks a vice president of health services to provide leadership to the 120-bed health-care center and 70-unit assisted-living facility. Reporting to the CEO, this individual must have a nursing home administrator's license, 5-7 years management experience in a CCRC setting, strong compliance knowledge, collaborative management approach and a clear values-based leadership style. Interested people should send inquiries to: Caryn Howell, 234 S. Main St., Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46526, fax 574-534-3254 or email carynhowell@msn.com

Be a leader at **Dock Woods Community**, a beautiful continuing-care retirement community located on 107 acres in Lansdale, Pa. We are seeking a ***F/T or two P/T RN Supervisor(s)*** for the 3-11 shift. We need your leadership and clinical skills to help us keep the quality of our care high. You will be responsible for the oversight of resident care and staff in various nursing departments within the community. Qualified candidates must possess a current RN license, demonstrated leadership experience and strong clinical, assessment, organizational, decision-making and interpersonal skills. Be part of an organization that truly lives its mission: "Dock Woods Community is a living dedication to the enhancement of life for older adults and families, rooted in the Mennonite heritage of Christian values" and its core values of respect, integrity, compassion and excellence. We offer a competitive salary and benefits package in a setting that provides support with good staffing ratios—well above state requirements. Learn more about us by visiting our Web site at www.dockwoods.com. Interested candidates should send resumé along with salary requirements via fax: 215-565-2413, email: eprice@dockwoods.com or mail: HR Department, Dock Woods Community, 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446.

Dock Woods Community, a continuing-care retirement community located in Lansdale, Pa., is looking for a ***full-time activity coordinator*** for Harmony House, our personal care dementia unit. Job responsibilities include utilizing knowledge of organization and interpersonal communication skills in order to plan, organize, present and implement activities, which provide social, cognitive, creative, physical and spiritual benefit to the residents. In addition, this team member will be responsible for coordinating, orientating, supervising, instructing and developing volunteers in the activities department.

Dock Woods Community offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Interested candidates should send resumé along with salary requirements to the HR Dept. 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446 or fax to 215-565-2413. EOE www.dockwoods.com.

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Mary,

We did it! Our team won our first water volleyball tournament! What a great time Joe and I are having at Tel Hai. It's so much fun here. Our home is beautiful and our days are full of wonderful times with great friends. We're retired...and loving it! Hope you'll come visit us soon!

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Goshen College seeks candidates for a half-time ***coordinator of church relations***, an administrative faculty position to begin immediately. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page: www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Eastern Mennonite University announces ***full-time continuing faculty position*** in business, with emphasis in marketing, information systems or management, beginning Fall 2007. Ph.D. or D.B.A. preferred; Ph.D. candidates considered. Master's degree and industry experience required; teaching experience ideal. Applicants must be willing and able to teach courses in marketing, management and/or information systems, with specific courses to be determined. Other responsibilities include student advising, university service and professional experience/scholarship. Salary and rank determined by education and experience. EMU uses an extended contract system. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, vice president and undergraduate academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, www.emu.edu. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. Review begins Jan. 1, 2007. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversty.

Frazer (Pa.) Mennonite Church, located 25 miles west of Philadelphia, is seeking a ***full-time pastor***. Frazer is a suburban congregation of 125 members which desires an experienced pastor who is gifted in preaching and teaching and who shares our vision for community outreach, peace and justice ministries and active lay leadership. Please visit frazermennonite.org or contact Larry Massanari at 610-524-8332 or lmassanari@aol.com.

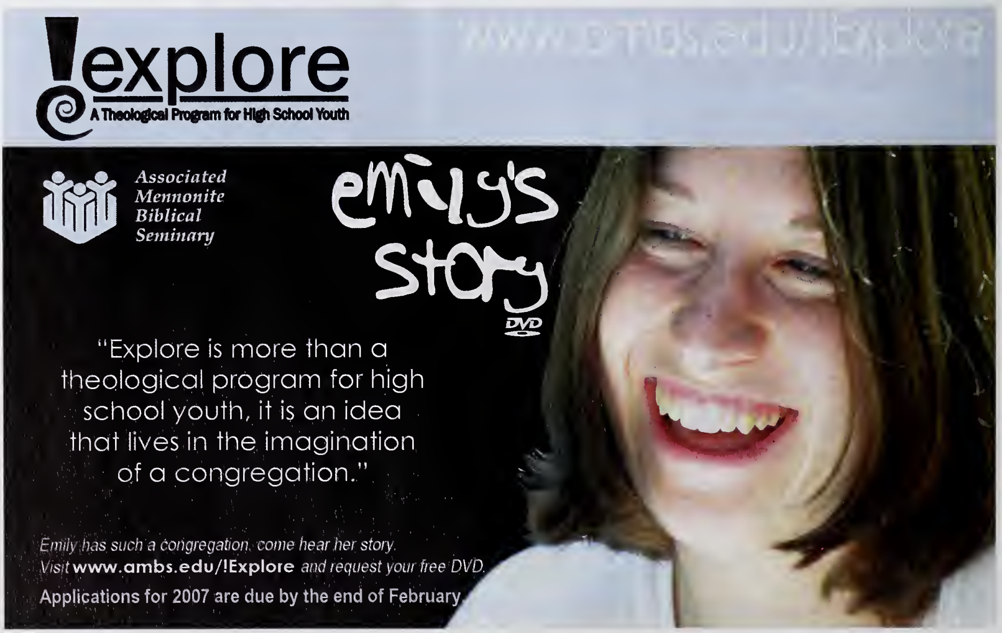
Interim associate pastor (during search for long-term pastor): **Hyattsville Mennonite Church** (www.hyattsvillemennonite.org) is an urban congregation committed to making Anabaptist traditions and beliefs relevant in the cultural setting of the Washington, D.C., area. Applicant would work with lead pastor for a term of 9-12 months. For more information contact Chair of the Search Committee: Tim Wiens, 301-949-8628, ext. 105 or interimpastorsearch@hyattsvillemennonite.org.

Pigeon River Mennonite Church is seeking a ***full-time pastor*** who loves to encourage members to use their gifts, delegates responsibilities and enjoys teaching the Word. Located near Pigeon, Mich., we are a congregation of 180 seeking the heart of God. We are currently focused on building bridges to the unchurched, developing more small groups and utilizing our gifts. Contact Gerry Swartzendruber at 7691 Pigeon Road, Pigeon, MI 48755, or waygers@hotmail.com, phone 989-453-3088.

Philadelphia Mennonite High School, a dynamic and innovative urban high school, is in the search process for an ***assistant principal***. Candidates with a vibrant Christian faith and teaching and/or administrative experience are encouraged to apply. Please direct inquiries/resumé to Dr. Barbara Moses, Principal, 860 N. 24th St., Philadelphia, PA 19130, phone 215-769-5363; fax 215-769-4063; email mos147@comcast.net.

Schowalter Villa, a continuing-care retirement community, seeks a ***full-time chaplain***. Candidate will develop relationships with residents and staff and lovingly tend to the community's spiritual formation. Position open until filled. Prefer early December start date. For more information contact Lillian Claassen at lillianc@schowalter-villa.org or call 620-327-3400.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.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West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship is a creative urban Anabaptist community seeking a ***full-time pastor***. We are a 20-year-old congregation with an average attendance of 80 consisting primarily of young adults and families. Members are active in leading worship, preaching and all aspects of church ministries. For more information about the church go to www.wpmf.com; for more information about the pastor position contact Drick Boyd 610-341-4360.

Seattle Mennonite Church (SMC) is seeking a compassionate leader to serve in its new, full-time position of ***community minister***. This person would continue the development and administration of SMC's ministry to the homeless community in its neighborhood, serving as a member of the ministerial team and work in collaboration with the current task force. Experience and/or training in urban outreach, particularly with homeless populations, preferred. If interested, please contact Karen Solberg at 206-361-4630 or email at kmpatterson@netsmc.net.

Coaldale Mennonite Church is seeking to hire a ***full-time senior pastor*** to provide leadership to a pastoral team and a multigenerational membership of 300. The successful candidate will be committed to Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, have leadership experience, will be gifted in preaching, teaching and visitation. Preferred starting date March 1, 2007. Please respond by Nov. 17 to Search Committee, phone 403-345-6728 or fax 403-345-6758.

Director of libraries. Provide leadership and coordination in planning, budgeting, organizing and staffing the library. MLS required. A graduate degree in another discipline desired, with a preference for studies in theology. Knowledge of Anabaptist Mennonite theology, history and scholarship desirable. EMU seeks people who are supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices. Candidates should submit a letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Provost, **Eastern Mennonite University**, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email to provost@emu.edu. Position open July 1, 2007. Those who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

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Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for a ***director of development***. This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. The successful candidate will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment and be available to begin employment between August 2006 and July 2007.

Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net.

Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

Mennonite Mission Network has immediate openings for the following:

Web architect and software engineer (full-time) in the Newton, Kan., office. This person's role is to design, build, implement, document and ensure stability of all custom written applications including both Web and client server applications in a Microsoft.NET development environment. This person will also be responsible for the technical design of both the internal and external Internet presence for the organization. This includes the selection of Web applications hardware and software platforms, developing site navigation and designing an application framework. Responsibilities include ascertaining system volume and analyzing traffic patterns. Exceptional knowledge of various Web and client server development languages is required. Also required is a college diploma or university degree in the field of computer science or information systems and/or 3-5 years equivalent work experience. Applications close Nov. 13.

Director of congregational relations (full-time) with experience in congregational life to lead its congregational relations department in the Newton, Kan., office. Congregations are central to the purpose and vision of Mission Network, and this person will lead in creating effective relationships with Mennonite Church USA congregations and engaging members in God's mission. Our ideal candidate will have a bachelor's degree with courses and/or experience in communications and public relations. Theological education, mission experience and bilingual ability are qualities that will enhance job performance. Knowledge of congregational dynamics is essential as is the ability to travel to congregations and participate in assemblies and other similar meetings.

Mennonite Voluntary Service director (full-time) to provide vision and leadership, in a team environment, for sustaining and developing the Mennonite Voluntary Service program. This person will be able to initiate and nurture individual, group and corporate relationships, to relate to people with differing theological and cultural assumptions and to relate to and understand faith development appropriate to young adults. Our ideal candidate will bring administrative skills to manage this dynamic and important program. Other qualifications include ability to travel frequently, communicate comfortably by telephone and email, and computer literacy. This strong leader must be passionate about mission and service and able to forge trusting and productive relationships. Applications close Nov. 13.

Women, racial ethnic and bilingual applicants are especially welcomed. For more information, see Staff Opportunities at www.MennoniteMission.net, email your resumé to staffrecruitment@MennoniteMission.net, or call Linda Krueger, Human Resources Assistant, at 574-523-3009.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

Families divided by politics

Gerald Shenk teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

Another election season has passed. Fierce storms roiled the body politic. Sudden new controversies provided endless entertainment in the talking heads industry. Partisan powers scrambled to identify wedge issues that pull us apart, stir us from our lethargy and secure our allegiance in the binary rituals of voting. Yes/No, these/those, for/against, incumbent/challenger—What shall we do with such portentous choices?

From what I've observed, families often have difficulty talking about their political differences. Perhaps, as the business world suggests, we decide it's better simply to avoid topics that produce unwelcome tensions. When as newlyweds in California for seminary studies, my wife and I in 1975 took marginal employment at Stump Mortuary in exchange for no-cost lodging. The directors reflected prevailing wisdom: "Two topics we don't discuss with our clients are politics and religion." They sought seminarians for the job but forbade these realms of predictable controversy.

The political season creates opportunities in the courses I teach. When we consider the social context of theology, for example, the uses and misuses of religion in political campaigns beg for critical analysis. Probing the ubiquitous voters' guides reveals disturbing assumptions. And while I do not conceal my own commitments, I try to prevent classroom discussions from degenerating into banter and partisan rhetoric. My goal is to make the classroom a safe space for examining a wide range of opinions. Shouldn't it be so in our families also?

I've made this my goal in my family. We talk politics a lot; we've gone to rallies together and follow multiple news sources. But party loyalty isn't at the heart of it. Rather, we speak of underlying values that cut across party lines. We complexify issues; we discuss voting options, but all the while we keep a larger frame of reference in view—the kingdom of God.

Strange things happen, however, when people whose values we thought we knew suddenly pop up on the other side of the gulfs that divide us. An unaccompanied minor at a family reunion blurts out a political slogan that puts him at odds with the rest of those present, and awkward silence ensues. A meanspirited bumper sticker shows up at a family gathering, too provocative for civil discourse.

I am drawn to an approach I observed during a similar season of political hyperventilation while we sojourned at Reba Place Church in Evanston, Ill. In 1984, the body politic was riven with fears of militarism on one side and concerns over abortion on the other: "How can you be a Christian and support an abortion advocate like Mondale?" And just as passionately, "How can you be a Christian in this church and support a warmonger like Reagan?" The discussion went beyond careful nuances and subtle distinctions. The congregation and its leaders could have pulled apart into partisan camps.

The wise elders took prompt action to convene a Sunday afternoon forum for the whole church and invited people from "each side" to make brief presentations.

The single question, as I recall: How does your evaluation of issues in this campaign reflect your commitments to God's kingdom?

We listened carefully to accounts from either side of the political divide. These were not the usual sets of Democratic or Republican rhetoric. Rather, each began with faith affirmations, rooted in our shared vision of the reign of God. We joined in commitments to life, to care for those in need and to a vision for peace across the world's most painful divisions. Within this larger framework, some moved toward engagement with the lives of the unborn, while others urged resistance to militarist campaigns. Each side had persuasive points, but the aim was not to recruit the undecided into one camp or the other. Rather, each put forth, along with their sincere convictions, an acknowledgement that the deeper concerns of the other side also carried weight with them.

The wisdom of the elders moved us beyond the simplistic boosterism of slogans and T-shirts in the heat of the election. They let us hear that none of the choices was perfect. And even if we left just as convinced of our personal preferences among the available candidates, we were also more able to answer the original grating questions of how they can be Christians in this fellowship and support candidate X.

Perhaps this approach can be used in our families as well. When our values cut across party lines, because we belong first to God's higher kingdom, then we can prod each other to show our children a better way. Two people I most admire are married, yet she votes Democrat and he Republican. Their love and respect for each other, even while differing substantially on their choice of candidates, is a reminder in our family about the larger kingdom purposes they both serve.

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Mandy Yoder, an Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary graduate, and her husband Jon Schrock, an anesthesiology resident, attend First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis where Mandy serves as associate pastor.

They say you reap what you sow

In the case of Mandy Yoder and Jon Schrock, Mennonite Church USA is enjoying the fruits of its labor. They grew up in traditional Mennonite families and knew they wanted to serve others. Goshen College is one of many places they experienced the joy and responsibility of living in community. They say it's where they "gained perspective on our place in the world" and realized they were part of something bigger than themselves – a churchwide family and a global community.

Both are using the tools they gained as a result of their Mennonite education to follow Jesus and offer healing and hope to others. They encourage the youth at First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis to pursue Mennonite higher education, too. For them, it's just another way of planting seeds for the next generation of leaders for Mennonite Church USA.

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Sharing is about leadership

The practice of sharing during worship is common to many Mennonite congregations. But there may be a relationship between the value a congregation places on this practice and the value a congregation places on leadership. Congregations that are most adamant about leaving time for sharing may value leadership less. Congregations that place a high value on leadership probably value sharing less.

In February we published an article by Arthur Paul Boers who compared the modern-day practice of sharing to a non-native species that has been introduced into our spiritual ecosystem and has become predatory.

"One gets the impression we could happily drop many parts of worship but dare not mess with sharing. Indeed, churches often skip over, shorten or omit other parts of their services when sharing goes 'too long.' We put time limits on duly designated leaders who carefully prepare prayers and sermons but hesitate to restrict people who speak off the cuff" ("Thank You For Zebra Mussels, Asian Ladybugs and Sharing?" Feb 21).

In this issue, we have a considered response from Alan Kreider. Kreider shows how sharing has roots in both Scripture and Anabaptist tradition and describes the practice as a recovery of witness.

What divides us is not only whether sharing is good or bad. The practice of sharing also reveals attitudes toward leadership.

"The roots of testimony are deep in the Bible. Not only in the psalms of thanksgiving; also in psalms of lament. … Testimony is also central to early Anabaptism. In the 1530s Swiss Anabaptists refused to attend established churches in which professional clergy monopolized worship services" (page 8).

For several decades our family attended a small congregation in which the sharing period was a core part of each Sunday's experience. Sometimes it was inappropriately personal, and sometimes it was inspiring.

We now attend a congregation that has not had a tradition of such sharing and probably never will. Consequently, I am of two minds on this matter.

What I miss about sharing is exactly what Boers laments: the spontaneous and unprofessional nature of its content. I was comfortable sitting through halting and inarticulate speeches because they often revealed the spiritual depth from which a brother's or sister's faith emerged.

What I don't miss is the excessive and, sometimes, melodramatic information about other people's medical problems—what one wag called his congregation's "organ recital."

After rereading the articles by Boers and Kreider, I've concluded that what divides us is not only whether sharing is good or bad. The practice of sharing also reveals attitudes toward leadership.

Congregations that do not have sharing time usually value clear leadership by those from the congregation called to speak. Congregations that value sharing time—to the extreme Boers describes—want a worship experience where each person's contribution is considered of equal worth to building up the body.

Both authors allude to leadership in their statements. Boers complains that "we put time limits on duly designated leaders who carefully prepare prayers and sermons but hesitate to restrict people who speak off the cuff." Kreider counters with his claim that Anabaptist leaders in the 1530s "refused to attend established churches in which professional clergy monopolized worship services."

This difference encapsulates our diversity in the church. Boers and Kreider are colleagues; both theologians teach at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

When we worship God, we want to bring our best. For some of us, the most edifying worship flows from everyday lives of sisters and brothers around us—and the words they use to describe their walk with God. Others of us want to follow leaders in whom we have confidence: We know they will speak the words that lift our spirits heavenward without distracting surprises.

These differences are also part of who we are and call for tolerance and understanding.—*ejt*

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32 Cigarette smoke in church

A cold and broken hallelujah

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

It is the friend whom you believed to be telling you the truth, yet now you are not sure.

It is others who are absolutely sure they know the truth and turn away from you because you will not commit yourself to their cause.

It is political parties who constantly blame each other for their failures yet seem to take no responsibility except to keep on doing what they have always been doing.

It is the advertisements, radio spots and television infomercials that tell you you absolutely need and must have what they offer or your life will be deficient.

It is the leaves falling off the trees and sun disappearing behind masses of gray, hurricanes and hunger due to lack of rain for crops.

It is individuals suffering silently yet being angry because no one notices their misery.

It is children targeted at schools because they are girls and shot or molested.

It is mental illness that debilitates the one and injures others or makes them afraid for their lives.

It is endless work or work that has come to an abrupt end with a layoff or downsizing.

It is your parents or children who have caused you the greatest pain and the greatest joy within the same lifetime.

It is your sons who have been bullied and scarred by other boys.

It is your congregation that you are convinced doesn't meet your needs.

It is your spouse whom you never see due to your work schedules.

It is the cancer, diabetes or heart disease that seems to invade bodies at will.

It is wars and needless violence robbing people of their God-given breath of life.

On and on we enumerate our laments, appalled at the number we live with daily and still accumulate more. And like David we admit to God that we "have no good apart from you" (Psalm 16:2). This was the admission of King David who committed adultery and plotted murder. This was shepherd David whose marriage to Michal was filled with arguments and anger. This was the Father of Israel, David who lost a baby. This was David the commander of armies, whose own two sons brought him both great joy in Solomon and great grief in Absalom. And this was David who danced before the Lord and wanted to die himself instead of his son, Absalom. This was God-anointed David who became completely ineffective as king of Israel in his old age. Even while carrying all these hurts, this same man still brought praise to God.

Like David's, our hearts are often empty and broken by our own sins and the sins of others. Yet in the midst of this reality we admit, "You are my Lord" (Psalm 16:2). Hallelujah. Praise be to God.

Praise is rarely a joyful sound emanating from a perfect life. More often it is an expression of faith in our God in the midst of a cold and broken world. To bless the Lord is to hold one's head up even when you feel like you are sinking below the turmoil. It is the refrain to a litany of laments for the person whose eyes are fixed on God.

Often it is not easy to say hallelujah. The truth is that complaints come easier. However, in spite of all that is wrong, we still find ourselves holding tightly to what is right in our lives—our faith in God. Our hope is that someday God's justice and peace will reign, that God will be merciful to us in our pain and grant us grace. In the meantime, we will lament and yet praise the God who created us and sustains us through it all.

Thanksgiving means we can sing in spite of our brokenness. Hallelujah and Amen.

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 22, November 21, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Web site: www.TheMennonite.org

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

1251 Virginia Ave.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
phone: 540-434-2556
fax: 540-434-5556

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Postmaster
Send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526

Mennonite
Church
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Cover photo: A young lawyer and new Christian, Dr. Ruy Leme, studies the Bible with Glenn Musselman in Sertaozinho, Brazil, 1964. Mennonite Church USA Archives.

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Those who hate peace

As a fellow Dutchman and Mennonite by birth and choice, I resonate with Arthur Paul Boers' personal story in "Dwelling Among Those Who Hate Peace" (Oct. 3) but with one significant difference: I grew up in an environment in which nonresistance and forgiveness were both preached and practiced.

During the five years of Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, I became well aware that holding the peace position could be costly and sometimes deadly. Germans would never understand why we didn't appreciate their efforts to cleanse our country of those "dirty swine," the Jews. Our Dutch neighbors couldn't see why we despised the Nazi ideology but didn't hate those "damn Germans" or why we didn't support the Dutch armed resistance movement.

During the worldwide economic crisis of the 1930s, some Dutch people saw their salvation in Fascism and formed a Dutch Nazi Party, the NSB. Once the Germans invaded Holland and Naziism showed its true face, the party's numbers dwindled. Among the NSBers were a few Mennonites, their names and their level of participation are known.

For the record it should be pointed out that Holland's most famous war criminal may have been of Mennonite background, but this man and his parents put more credence in the pages of the NSB paper, *Volk en Vaderland*, than in the words of Scripture. When the war ended this man managed to deceptively use a Mennonite identity to escape justice for over thee decades.

Once World War II ended—and ever since—people have asked, "Where were the German Christians, where were the Mennonites when Hitler rose to power?" Now, while the latest of the American wars grinds down to its inglorious and disastrous end, the world is already beginning to ask: Where were the American Christians when the United States took this course? Who are the Dietrich Bonhoeffers, the André Trocmés, the Martin Niemoellers of our generation?—*Jan Gleysteen, Goshen, Ind.*

Thank you, Arthur Paul Boers, for your thoughts on the current administration and the theological claims of George W. Bush. I, too, have been concerned about George W. Bush's use of Christian language. It gives me chills when I hear him use his relationship with God as a selling point for his political choices. Bush does not seem to want to work with neighboring countries toward peace in a way that I believe the Bible calls us to. The Bible asks us to love our enemies and not to kill. Using nonviolence would make our world a better place to live. I would like to hear our Mennonite Church USA challenge and confront George W. Bush and his administration on his choices to use violence to bring about peace. The wars are tearing the world apart and too many people are being killed.—*Ruth Kauffman, Portland, Ore.*

We feel *The Mennonite* has become a political magazine, which is troubling. The article by Arthur Paul Boers in the Oct. 3 issue is a case in point. Where is the call for prayer? These are difficult times.—*Ross and Vesta Landis, Orrville, Ohio*

Where are we going?

Not yet having seen other responses to Robb Davis (Where Are We Going? Sept. 19), I want to register our agreement with Robb's questions about the goals of development. Reading *The Mennonite* from a Latin American, third world context highlights for us the extreme disparities within the global Mennonite church. We often ask ourselves, the Lord and others, When will the church call us to seriously face the implications of following the economic empire? Robb has raised the key ethical issue for the church in this century. Will a significant number of church leaders pick up the challenge? Are enough of us willing to take the risks to make a difference? Obedience, not effectiveness, is the real issue.—*Willis G. Horst, Formosa, Argentina*

Tipping sacred cows

Kudos to the Sunday school class of the East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., as reported in the Oct. 3 issue ("What Are We

IN THIS ISSUE

On the Mennonite Church USA calendar, November is missions month. While we don't limit mission stories to November, we've chosen to focus on that topic in this issue. Susan Biesecker-Mast (page 8) asks if we need to limit our Anabaptist identity in order to be missional. Her nuanced answer is no. Carl Geissinger (page 11) calls us to a renewed passion for helping people meet God. James Graber (page 14) writes about his grandparents, Glenn and Lois Musselman, who worked as missionaries in Brazil. Andy Shenk (page 16) writes about the Tabasaran people and the mix of beauty and pain he witnessed in their homeland. Stanley Green (page 18), executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, calls us to be more like Abraham and less like his father Terah and share God's blessings with "the families of the nations." And Everett J. Thomas (page 32) points to Ray Tharpe as one who received and shared God's message of grace.—*Associate editor*

Waiting For?"). Seldom do we publicly admit having thoughts that are not in perfect alignment with strongly defended Mennonite doctrine. However, to have a lengthy and serious study with the free flow of alternate ideas is almost unheard of. In fact, it is considered such near-heresy that immediately following the article, the editors gave a disclaimer as to the acceptance of the points made in Berry Friesen's well-written article—thus sending a chilling message that we ought not to be attempting to tip over any more sacred cows. —*Harley Hofstetter, Dalton, Ohio*

Empty nest syndrome

The article by Michael King ("It Really Is Empty in This Nest," Oct. 3) brought back memories. It was difficult to remember that time—until I read again what I wrote then. No one read it before, as I felt it was too personal:

> Empty Nest Syndrome
> Your cold toes touch mine.
> No warmth fills my dark corners.
> They are all flown.
> To the ends of the earth,
> To the arms of their mates,
> To the call of their loves,
> And You are no comfort.

Now, long after, I realize how universal are the parent birds' feelings as the nest empties.—*Areta Lehman, Goshen, Ind.*

Abortion a single-issue vote?

As I went to the polls this year I specifically voted for pro-life, pro-marriage and profamily candidates. Over the last couple of years I have been accused of being a one-issue voter, since the abortion issue is that important to me. But is abortion really only about one issue?

The United States faces a myriad of economic issues today—illegal immigration, Medicare/Medicaid that is going bankrupt, too few workers, percentage of taxes too high as well as too few people to defend her borders and streets. All of these issues are a direct result of 33 years of abortion.

Abortion is an economic plague on our country. We face illegal immigration problems because there are many jobs that go unfilled by the 20 million workers to date we have aborted. Medicaid and Medicare are unable to be properly financed because there are more than 20 million fewer paying workers in the work force because of abortion. Employers find it increasingly difficult to find employees because more than 20 million have been aborted. Our taxes keep climbing because 20 million taxpayers have been aborted. Our military and police find it increasingly difficult to find the manpower to protect our nation and streets, since 20 million potential recruits have been aborted.

What about the intellectual loss to America because of abortion? We have lost geniuses who could have helped resolve world hunger, global warming, the crisis in the Middle East or transitioning from fossil fuels to other fuels. We have lost the scientists who could have prevented many diseases including the avian bird flu, cancer, Parkinson's and other forms of dementia. We have lost God-centered church leaders who could lead us in truly worshiping God. And abortion has taken away many concert instrumentalists and vocalists, artists and sculptors.

None of these arguments takes into account the moral issue: Abortion is murder, and those who support it—by vote or practice—are murderers.

This is only the beginning of the cost of abortion to the United States. The 20 million represents the number lost that would be above 18 right now and able to work and contribute to our society. There are still 20 million more to come, even if abortion were stopped today.

When you vote against abortion, you are voting for a myriad of economic, scientific and intellectual gains for America. It is time to stop the wholesale slaughter of our children.—*Keith Landis, West Liberty, Ohio*

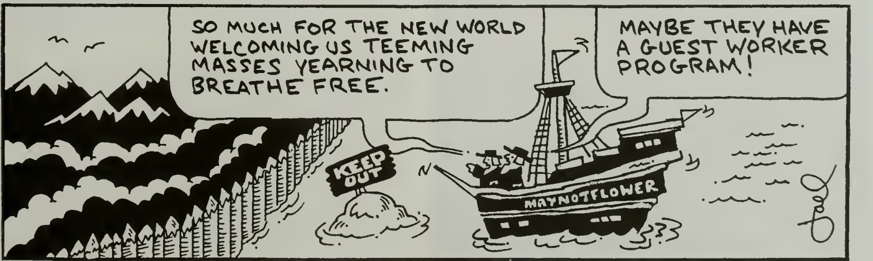
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

To be more missional, Mennonites should: (59 votes)

- ○ emphasize Mennonite distinctives (such as peace, community, nonconformity) more (80%)
- ○ emphasize Mennonite distinctives less (8%)
- ○ remain as we are (5%)
- ○ Not sure (7%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


SO MUCH FOR THE NEW WORLD WELCOMING US TEEMING MASSES YEARNING TO BREATHE FREE.
MAYBE THEY HAVE A GUEST WORKER PROGRAM!
KEEP OUT
MAYNOTFLOWER
Joel

IN BRIEF

'Shalom activists' protest U.S. spy base in England

This summer 15 self-proclaimed "shalom activists" joined a nonviolent demonstration at Menwith Hill in England, reputedly the largest U.S. spy base in the world. The 15 are students from the Peace School, peaceschool.org.uk, a member of the Root and Branch Network that includes the London Mennonite Centre. Jonathon Dorsett, who began the school, realized that he and "most Western people of 'good conscience' picked what and where we involved ourselves without putting ourselves or our lifestyles on the line."—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Mennonites hold song fest in three languages

The Mennonite Church USA churches of Sarasota, Fla., gathered at Ashton Mennonite Church Oct. 22 for the second annual Sarasota Mennonite Song Fest to praise God in three languages and celebrate the unity of faith experienced by three cultures: Hispanic, Haitian and Anglo. For a devotional reading of Scripture, the eight pastors read a psalm in three languages as a choric reading. An offering of over $700 was received for Mennonite Disaster Service. —*Martin W. Lehman*

MCC executive committee calls for unity

AKRON, Pa.—The recent resignation of Mennonite Central Committee executive director Robb Davis has caused the MCC executive committee, who hired Davis, to add additional time to their already planned January 2007 meeting here for gathering an "organizational consensus" about keeping the 86-year-old international relief, development and peace agency moving forward.

"While Robb's resignation has not stopped any of the day-to-day work of MCC in responding to those in need around the world, it does call us to a serious discussion about internal organizational structure and culture," says Ron Dueck, chair of the MCC executive committee.

The MCC executive committee has informed staff and board members that a review of Davis' resignation led to identifying internal governance and structural issues which led to the resignation and made it difficult for Davis to work within the MCC culture.

"Our goal is to move toward a comprehensive organizational consensus on the direction we wish MCC to take in the future," Dueck says.

Some of the issues identified by the executive committee included the lack of clarity around the function of governing bodies, the role of the executive director in the decision-making process, benchmarks of organizational success and unclear lines of accountability within and between entities.

In addition to MCC, which is based in Akron, there are 11 other MCC offices, all with separate executive directors and boards. These offices include the MCC Canada and MCC U.S. national offices as well as five provincial offices in Canada and four regional U.S. offices. All but a few of these are separately incorporated.

The MCC executive committee will continue to meet over the next several weeks to complete work on hiring an interim executive director. Lowell Detweiler is currently serving as short-term acting executive director.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Lyn Stegemiller

St. Marcellus, a man of his word

Eight members of the faculty, staff and student body of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., carry a cross Nov. 6 from Mishawaka to South Bend, Ind., on their way to Marcellus Day activities. St. Marcellus was a Roman soldier who put down his sword in A.D. 298, refusing to serve anyone but Jesus. He paid for his beliefs with his life.—*South Bend Tribune*

Mennonites and Pentecostals discuss mission

EVANSTON, Ill.—Twenty representatives from Mennonite Church USA and the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), a Pentecostal denomination, gathered for a consultation on mission Sept. 8-10 at Reba Place Church and Fellowship in Evanston. It was the second organized encounter between the denominations. A preliminary discussion among three members from each group took place in Cleveland, Tenn., in May 2005. Conversation with Pentecostals is one of four ongoing priorities for the interchurch relations work of Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership.

The major discussion times focused on the two issues: the Holy Spirit's role in the missional church and the forming and sustaining of alternative communities. Participants toured Reba Place.

The consultation recommended three proposals to the respective executive bodies: (1) that several Church of God and Mennonite Church USA congregations share resources, undertake joint projects and perhaps even exchange a few members temporarily during the next year; (2) that another consultation occur in about a year, of about the same size and among many of the same people to deepen relationships; (3) that a conference on holiness and salvation be held in 12-18 months involving scholars, pastors and other church leaders. —*Mennonite Church USA*

Goshen to launch first master's program

GOSHEN, Ind.—Building on its 25-year history of offering environmental education programming for K-12th grade students, Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College will offer a Master of Arts in Environmental Education program—the college's first master's degree.

The Higher Learning Commission of North

CMU photo

at would Jesus drive? A bike.

am Beriault of Calgary repairs a bike at the new Canadian
nnonite University bike co-op. Chris Huebner, assistant pro-
sor of theology and ethics at CMU, is a driving force (no pun
ended) behind Sanctoral Cycle, the co-op. The co-op takes
name from the liturgical cycle of feast days in honor of the
nts. And just as feast days serve to nourish and sustain the
dy, enabling people to form habits that contribute to virtu-
s character, the co-op seeks to cultivate good habits of
ysical health and environmental stewardship, Huebner says.
riault, a fourth-year history major from Calgary, is the co-
s resident mechanic.—*CMU*

Central Association of Colleges and Schools officially accredited the program on Sept. 11.

All of the courses for the degree will be taught at Merry Lea, and the requirements for the program will be completed in one calendar year—starting in July and ending the following June. The first cohort of students begins July 2007.

Merry Lea, located near Wolf Lake, Ind., is among the best-assembled land preserves in Indiana and contains a diverse group of ecosystems. The 1,150-acre preserve contains a complex of wetlands, bogs, lakeshores, upland and lowland forests, prairies and meadows.—*Goshen College*

EMHS students raise $12,050 for orphanage

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Eastern Mennonite High School and Middle School students here learned about sacrificial giving this fall, helping raise money for New Life Home orphanage in Kenya.

Physical education teacher and varsity boys soccer coach Kendal Bauman and his soccer players rode bikes 15 miles in lieu of practice one day, celebrating the personal sacrifice each player made to donate $30 of their own money. John Leonard also rode with the team, accepting sponsors for the bike ride, and together they raised nearly $8,000 for New Life Home.

With the support of the student council, Bauman and Leonard presented New Life Home's ministry to the entire student body during chapel and challenged students with sacrificial giving. The student body responded, pushing the total school donation to $12,050.—*Eastern Mennonite High School*

Retired pastor, two others, drown in accident

GRAND MARAIS, Mich.—A retired Mennonite pastor who was a skilled carpenter died Oct. 6, along with his son and daughter-in-law, when their boat capsized in rough seas on Lake Superior.

Killed were Willard Donald Handrich, 89, his son, Eldon Handrich, 59, and his son's wife, Maggie Handrich, 60, both of Laramie, Wyo.

A fourth companion, longtime friend Robert Nyman, 62, of Grand Marais, was rescued after more than 14 hours in 55-degree water. He told authorities he saw the other three drown after struggling for hours to remain afloat near the overturned vessel. None of the bodies was recovered, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

Willard Handrich was the founding pastor of Grand Marais Mennonite Church in 1949, according to its pastor, Steven Post.

Handrich married Mary Lehman on Dec. 31, 1941, and was a conscientious objector during World War II. He served in Civilian Public Service 1942-46, including a stint as a smoke jumper in the Montana Rockies in 1945, according to the family.

Handrich was ordained on Oct. 3, 1948, and served the Grand Marais congregation as pastor for 32 years.

Surviving are Handrich's wife, Mary; three daughters, Carla Stoltzfus and her husband, Vernon, of Lakewood, Colo., Shirley Bustos and her husband, Mario, of Valparaiso, Ind., and Joetta Schlabach and her husband, Gerald, of St. Paul, Minn.; a brother, Bruce; nine grandchildren; a stepgrandson; and four great-grandchildren. —*Mennonite Weekly Review*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

Mennonite Creation Care Network online

Mennonite Creation Care Network has a new online newsletter and a Web site (www.mennocreationcare.org). Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg helped sponsor a conference there Sept. 29-30 called "The Good Life on God's Good Earth: A Creation Care Conference." About 120 people attended.—*Mennonite Creation Care Network News*

The rich get richer, the rest not

Over the past quarter-century, and especially in the past 10 years, America's very rich have grown much richer. In 2004, the richest 1 percent of households—719,910 of them, with an average annual income of $326,720—had 19.8 percent fo the entire nation's pretax income. That's up from 17.8 percent a year earlier, according to a study by economist Emmanuel Saez. Median, or midpoint, family income rose only 1.6 percent between 2001 and 2004, when adjusted for inflation, according to the Federal Reserve. Experts disagree on the causes, but they're in near agreement that this trend threatens to erode a fundamental American belief about fairness.—*Wichita Eagle*

Missional Mennonites

by Susan Biesecker-Mast

I've also studied enough words about words to know that words can be deeds.

According to a good number of wise folks in our church, we have three key barriers to becoming missional, all rooted in Anabaptist peculiarity. They are our preference for deeds over words, our tendency toward separation rather than engagement and our greater affection for history over mission. To become a truly missional church, the reasoning goes, we need to back off good deeds and talk more about what it means to be a Christian. We need to throw off any remnants of our identity as the quiet in the land and engage our culture. We need to give up this fascination with our history and focus on reaching out to newcomers with different histories from ours. Much in this analysis and recommendations deserves our attention, but, as one brought into the Mennonite church from well outside it, I'd also like to trouble this wisdom a bit.

Is Anabaptism keeping us from becoming missional?

Word versus deed: A key barrier to becoming missional, people say, is our historical commitment and increasing preference for deeds over words. Rather than talk about what it means for us to be Christians, we prefer to engage in disaster service, famine relief and peacemaking. Such deeds are good, the argument goes, but they are not sufficient. The problem with us Mennonites is that we're all about deeds and we don't bother about words. We need to get some words.

As a university professor whose stock in trade is words, I'm certainly all for Mennonites producing more words. That's more for me to enjoy reading, more for me to make my students read, more for all of us to get together to talk about and more for me to write about.

Yet I struggle with this distinction. I know the difference between words and deeds. Words we speak or write, and deeds we do. Yet I've also studied enough words about words to know that words can also be deeds, as in, "I now pronounce you husband and wife." Or, conversely, hate speech consists of words that do horrible deeds of estrangement, harassment, even violence. These words do deeds.

More than that, I have always been puzzled why Christians want to focus on this distinction—indeed to make it an opposition—since our salvation depends on the miraculous conflation of word and deed. After all, it was the word made flesh—that is, the word incarnated into living, breathing, healing, teaching—in which we have been born again. In the same chapter of the Gospel of John that the writer states that whoever believes in the Son of God will have eternal life, he also stresses that "those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God." Indeed, it is in the light of the cross, the resurrection and our reconciliation to God and our enemies that we know that the reign of God is here, that we can recognize the truth of Jesus' victory over violence and death. So again I am puzzled by the fact that we Mennonites are as troubled as we are by our supposed preference for deeds, especially deeds that exhibit the light of God.

If we do need more words, perhaps what we need words about are our deeds. Perhaps we have not done a good enough job giving significance to our deeds so that people will know what they witness to. In any case, I hope we will not view words and deeds as a zero-sum game. If we need more words, then let's have them but not at the expense of the deeds that, in fact, seem to remind so many people around the world of our Lord and Savior.

Separation vs. engagement: A second commonly identified barrier to becoming missional is our separation from worldly culture. If we want to become missional, we should not seek to be separated from the world but work at intentional engagement. I agree we should engage our culture. But I also think we should not assume that separation is only ever an obstacle to engagement.

The obvious case against separation is our Anabaptist kin, the Amish. The Amish separate themselves from culture for a variety of reasons, and one of them is to protect themselves from acculturation. They remain Amish in large measure because they are good at marking and observing the boundaries between their community and mainstream culture. The problem, so the argument goes, is that in maintaining those boundaries so well they are unable to have any meaningful impact on the broader culture. They cannot be missional because they cannot engage others.

Because the Amish are so different and so strange, they inspire curiosity from middle Americans who are trying to figure out how to have a meaningful life at something less than breakneck pace in our consumer culture.

Because of a book I am writing on Amish tourism, I spend a lot of time watching the Amish and tourists move among one another and deal with each another. What I see even in these tourist settings is a lot of engagement by the Amish—not despite their separation but largely because of their separation. Precisely because they are so different and so strange, they inspire a good deal of curiosity from especially middle Americans who are trying to figure out how to have a meaningful life at something less than breakneck pace in our consumer culture. It's probably the case that most of the millions of tourists who come to Amish Country eat some chicken and mashed potatoes and go home without a significant thought about

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

that nonconformity. But I think many are at least given opportunity to be troubled by the peculiar witness of the Amish.

Mission vs. history: Our tendency today in the church is to think that mission and history are opposing terms. Mission is about becoming and history is about who we've been. Mission is about transforming the church. History is about what holds us back. I am not so sure of this.

As an adult who had given up on Christianity, I found my way back into the faith through a Mennonite church that read the Bible with an Anabaptist perspective. The more I studied that perspective, the more convinced I became that it was the right way to understand God's truth. The Anabaptists understood that the point of Christianity is the cross, the resurrection and reconciliation. They figured out that "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us." They understood that "God is making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). The Anabaptists, together with more contemporary interpreters of their wisdom, have taught us that the cross, resurrection and reconciliation give us the key to what John Howard Yoder called "the grain of the universe." As Christians who seek to be obedient to God's reign, our task is to figure out how to live with that grain.

We should cultivate the gospel of peace so that we can give it away in our words and our deeds. In this way the whole world may see the grain of the universe and choose also to live their lives with it.

This Anabaptist take on the Christian message is not typical for most Christian communities today. While Anabaptist convictions are rooted in a whole gospel witness that has been visible throughout the history of the church, among the defenseless "little flock," the majority of Christians seem not to have accepted the full authority of Jesus over their lives. Those of us with faith roots in the 16th-century Anabaptists—who made such a persuasive witness to gospel reconciliation—are thus seen as peculiar by the world of popular Christianity. But I have been convinced that the Anabaptists were right that the gospel cannot be protected by the sword and that as Mennonites we're on to something when we stress that a central feature of the gospel is liberation: from the need to protect ourselves, from the constraints of money and property and from the desire to fit in.

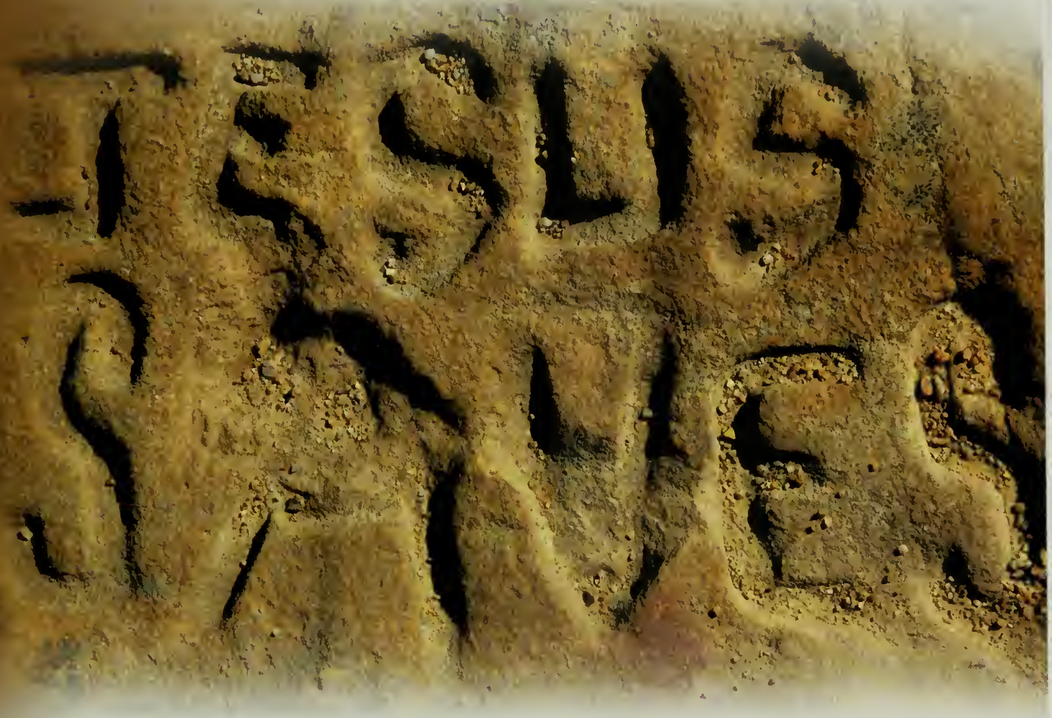
I don't want to jettison this history in the name of looking ahead. On the contrary, I think becoming missional depends on our cherishing this history. By cherishing our history I don't mean we should engage in relentless navel-gazing. That is, we should not study Anabaptist history in order to feel good about ourselves as something like special Christians. Rather we should cultivate the wisdom of our forebears so that we can give it away. By that I do not mean we should give it up in some ecumenical bargaining session in which we abandon the peace and stewardship witness as a way to feel part of the church catholic—a gift of belonging that we have already received from God. Rather we should cultivate the gospel of peace so that we can give it away in our words and our deeds. In this way the whole world may see the grain of the universe and choose also to live their lives with it.

Conclusion: I like the challenge we have posed to ourselves to become a missional church. And it is right to ask hard questions of ourselves about whether we have barriers in place to becoming missional. Having said that, I don't think these oppositions between deeds and words, separation and engagement, history and mission are especially helpful to us. We do not need to choose between doing and speaking, separating and engaging, cherishing our history and becoming missional. When we do our deeds well, they speak powerfully to the world about who our Savior and Lord is. And sure, let's talk about Jesus, too. We may actually find that the degree to which we are separated (meaningfully and visibly distinct from our death-obsessed and property-consumed culture) also enables our verbal witness to the world. Let's engage the world through our difference. Our history gives us a peculiar access to the good news, and the world needs to hear it. Let's be missional not despite our history but through it.

Susan Biesecker-Mast teaches communications at Bluffton (Ohio) University.

Dreaming of something better

by Carl Geissinger



Let's reclaim a passion for the lost.

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.—Mark 2:17 (NIV)

These words of Jesus characterize a passion we see reflected throughout Jesus' life and ministry. We see it in the story of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. We see it in the story of Zacchaeus and the woman caught in adultery. It gets at the heart of Jesus' purpose for taking on flesh and living among us.

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I dream of a day when we will quit worrying about whether our worship makes us feel comfortable and start thinking about whether our worship is helping people meet God.

Continued from page 11

I am a pastor and a sheep shearer. In the early 1990s, I began shearing sheep for a Church of the Brethren pastor named Bill Longenecker, who cared for a flock of 350 sheep and had taken on the ministry of reopening a church that had closed the year before. During the shearing days, Bill's wife, Peggy, served up a hearty lunch, and Bill served up enthusiastic stories around the table of what God was doing at the Steven's Hill Church of the Brethren.

They were committed to reaching the unchurched in the community surrounding the church facility, and the church quickly grew to a worshiping community of over 100 people. They shared Jesus' passion for the lost, and through prayer, community visitation, relevant worship and sincere spirituality many people came into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and his church.

Unfortunately four out of five churches in the United States are either at a plateau or declining in membership. Mennonite Church USA has gone from 135,000 members in 1998 (combined membership of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church) to 114,000 members in 2005.

Some of this is merger related, but we must face the fact that most of our congregations either have plateaued or are declining in membership.

Dare we dream of a day when Jesus' passion for the lost will again shake the Mennonite church? I dream of a day when spiritual vibrancy will permeate our congregations, when we will quit worrying about whether our worship makes us feel comfortable and start thinking about whether our worship is helping people meet God. I dream of a day when we will think less about carrying out certain programs and think more about engaging people in ministry. I dream of a day when those who are separated from God are being joined to Christ and his church on a regular basis.

What will it take to get there from here? Ron Crandall from Asbury Theological Seminary studied 100 churches that had made a significant turnaround and from that study wrote the book *Turnaround Strategies for the Small Church*. He invited the turnaround pastors to offer suggestions to other pastors. Their top four suggestions were these: Know and love your people, preach the wonderful gospel of Christ, pray and enable your people to pray, and help your people to reach out to others.

I once took a class at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., on Turn-Around Strategies for the Local Church taught by Art McPhee. From that class, the associated reading and some of my own reflections I suggest four things that are critical starting points if we are going to take turn around seriously.

Prayer: We must understand that turning churches around is not about trying to follow a strategy to accomplish our agenda. Rather it is about learning to tap into God's agenda for his church. We learn throughout Scripture and church history that the move of God's Spirit is unique to each situation. As God's people learn to humble themselves in prayer, the Spirit of God creatively empowers us to accomplish his work in the context he has placed us. Almost all the significant moves of God are preceded by a movement of prayer. We know that God has a passion for the lost. We know that God intends to use us to reach the lost. Prayer is what taps us into God's creative power and the move of his Spirit.

Intentional prayer may happen in a variety of ways. It may happen through regular prayer gatherings either by a prayer team or open to the entire congregation. It may happen by having prayer partners for the various ministries in the congregation. It may happen by teaming people up in the congregation in prayer groups of two or three. Alongside these organized prayer efforts must be the persistent praying of the people of God in our own time with God.

Peace, honesty, patience, compassion and forgiveness are important building blocks for healthy relationships in a growing church.

Relationships: Relationships will often make or break a congregation. The unchurched have no interest in risking their emotional well-being to a system of unhealthy relationships. If our churches will effectively reach those separated from Christ, we will have to be a safe haven where gossip, slander, quarreling, manipulation and rude behavior are not tolerated. Love must prevail, creating an atmosphere of genuine concern for one another. Peace, honesty, patience, compassion and forgiveness are important building blocks for healthy relationships in a growing church.

Relevance: Not long ago, I sat with a group of young men and women in their late teens and early 20s. I asked them what was important to them in the kind of church to which they would want to belong. One thing that came through loud and clear was relevance. This is coming through strong in much writing of the past five years as well. Our young people in our churches and in our communities have no interest in going through religious motions just because that is the way we do things here.

They have no interest in sitting on committees or holding positions that are not relevant to the movement of God's Spirit among us and connect with the felt needs around us.

We will do well to evaluate our worship, programming and structure with some type of relevance test. Does our worship help people meet God and draw us into the presence of God? Is it relevant to those we hope to reach? Are we enslaved to our structures, or are our structures effective tools that help us accomplish the mission God has for us? In his book *Kicking Habits*, Thomas Bandy says the bulk of energy in declining churches goes toward self-preservation. In a thriving church, people are called, equipped and sent to engage in ministry.

Witness: The community surrounding the Steven's Hill Church of the Brethren received a door-to-door invitation to come and be a part of what God was doing at the church. It was a simple, low-pressure invitation.

Many were not interested, but some were. Some of those who were interested came, and some of those who came to church came to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a long-term commitment to the church.

For a variety of reasons, witness, faith-sharing and invitation have almost become a lost art. I live with a passion to share my faith with those with whom my life intersects. I have struggled with how to do that well. I thought, I will watch those who impress me as doing it well and I will attempt to learn from them. The sad fact is that I have come across few people who, from my perspective, do this well.

There are those who are manipulative and obnoxious, which I have no desire to imitate. But the majority are much too silent when it comes to engaging others in conversations about our faith. To work at this, some of us have begun a small group in which we will meet periodically, pray for each other and our contacts and share stories and ideas so that we can learn from each other.

There are various other models that help us share our faith. If our churches are going to grow we will need to break the silence when it comes to who we are living for. It will help to allow our hearts to be broken over the hurt around us. And we must know that Jesus is the only source of true healing and spiritual wholeness. We must understand how much we are hurting those around us by not talking about the Jesus difference.

We must understand how much we are hurting those around us by not talking about the Jesus difference.

Jim Cymbala opens his book *The Church God Blesses* with this statement: "Every advancement in the way people live has come about because someone saw what could be and was no longer willing to accept what is. … They refused to yield to the idea that there was no better way to do things and pressed on toward something better, even though the process often required years of hard work and many failures along the way." I pray for a move of the Spirit of God among us to inspire us with a vision of what might be, instill a holy discontent with the way things are and show us the way to a new level of life and vibrancy.

Acts 2:47 (NIV) tells us "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." In a good year the Lord adds to our number annually those who are being saved. I dream of a time when the Lord will add to our number monthly or maybe even weekly those who are being saved.

Carl Geissinger is pastor of Barrville Mennonite Church, Reedsville, Pa.

Sertaozinho baptismal candidates, 1964

(Below) Antonio Mendes Luz was won to Christ through the testimony of his wife, Vanda. He rode his bike five miles every Sunday morning to attend church in Sertaozinho, 1964.

Sertaozinho church, 1964

Glenn Musselman | Mennonite Historical Library

Learning how m

'To know

him

My grandparents, Glenn and Lois Musselman, spent most of their working lives in Brazil. They served there as missionaries for 36 years with Mennonite Board of Missions (a forerunner of Mennonite Mission Network). They worked in five different cities in Brazil, spending 11 years in the city of Sertaozinho, Sao Paulo. Sertaozinho at that time (1957-1968) was a small town; today it has a population of about 95,000 people.

"I've always felt called to share," Grandma told me in an interview this summer. "Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to be a missionary." In fact, Grandma made Grandpa wait three whole days before she consented to marry him, because she thought she couldn't be a missionary with Grandpa being pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church, near Gettysburg, Pa. In October 1955, following three years at Bethel, they went to Brazil, as there was great demand to start building churches after World War II.

Wives prayed for their husbands to come. They became better wives. The husbands, wondering why the women had changed, also came to church, and many were transformed.

Grandma got interested in doing mission work from her parents, Charles Shenk and Crissie Yoder Shenk, who were missionaries in India for four years.

Her father always talked about India, showed her pictures, and as a family they often ate Indian foods. Grandpa was influenced by his grandfather, Samuel Musselman, who went to Argentina to help begin churches. While at Goshen (Ind.) College, both Grandpa and Grandma were part of Foreign Missions Fellowship, which was created to stimulate people to do missions work. "That was very instrumental in helping me to develop my conviction for doing international missionary work," Grandpa said.

Grandpa and Grandma said the first four years in Sertaozinho were challenging in a number of ways. One, they were trying to fit in and work in a rural, pre-Vatican II Catholic community. Two, their daughter Regina faced near death with a ruptured appendix. Regina had eight operations.

During this family crisis, Grandpa and Grandma

randparents became missionaries
Christ and make known'

by James Graber

felt that God helped them tremendously, through their faith and through the support from churches in Brazil and in the United States.

With the ups and downs of the first four years, Grandma said, "we worried about not having anything to show." People told them it was going to be a difficult place to start a church. In their fifth year, they baptized a member of the church.

Grandpa then taught English classes to make it easier to gain acceptance. The community began to accept them and attend their church. The priest, however, attacked my grandparents over the loudspeaker of his church, telling the community to burn the Gospel of John, that it should be a closed book. The priest wanted the people to come to him for answers, not the new church being built.

By this time, Grandpa and Grandma had made friends with some of the community. People knew what they were trying to teach. Even though they gained acceptance, it was only the women who came to church services. But an interesting thing happened. Wives prayed for their husbands to come. They became better wives. The husbands, wondering why the women had changed, also came to church, and many were transformed.

Probably the most life-changing episode of their mission work in Sertaozinho was when Grandpa was asked to give a sermon at the Catholic church. The Catholic church was now promoting a Bible week, and the nuns invited Grandpa to give one of the messages. Grandpa still remembers the verse he chose to be the centerpiece of his message: John 5:39 (King James), "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

The message had a big impact on the community. Grandpa did not attack the Catholics or talk about evangelical beliefs but about the Bible. He told the audience God calls us to read what's in the Scriptures. Grandpa still remembers what he preached about that day: "We must focus on Christ, and the Scriptures will lead us to him. The more we are Christ-centered, the more we are united." After this week, the Bible became an open book for the community, not forbidden. People were no longer afraid to look at the Bible but were encouraged. Today there are 20-25 evangelical churches in the city of Sertaozinho, Sao Paulo. "The seed was sown, and the fruit has been coming as we hear news from the variety of churches in Brazil," Grandma said.

A significant event that both Grandpa and Grandma enjoy is the Mennonite church conference that happens every two years in Brazil. The conference in Brazil is made up of five regions; Sertaozinho is in Region I. In 2005, they went to Brazil to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the conference at a campground just outside the capital city of Brasilia. Both of them enjoyed hearing prospering news from the churches they helped build and strengthen in Christ. "As we look back, I feel a sense of joy and fulfillment that what God started is now growing in evangelism and church planting," Grandpa said. They made many strong and close relationships with people in Brazil that to this day keep them connected. When talking about their years of mission in Brazil, they said, "We felt God used us to begin the Christian churches that are now self-growing, evangelizing people and starting new congregations."

As a kid in Brazil, I also did my share of going to the Mennonite conferences, my last one in Gravata, Recife, in 2001. It was fun. I always enjoyed the friendships created from the variety of Mennonite churches that came from different regions of Brazil. There were many youth, and we all had a great time participating in the various activities the conference offered.

Most important was the worship time. It was exciting to see so many people come together to worship God. We were all a big church family.

My grandparents' motto is "to know Christ and make him known." This is on the wall in their home at Greencroft in Goshen, where they moved in 1992. "I always wanted to let other people know about Jesus and wanted my life to be an example of Jesus," Grandma said.

James Graber graduated in April from Goshen (Ind.) College in communications, with an emphasis in public relations. This summer he worked as an intern in special assignments in the Greencroft marketing and development department. James grew up in Brazil and lives in Goshen.

Probably the most life-changing episode of their mission work in Sertaozinho was when Grandpa was asked to give a sermon at the Catholic church.

The people are

Beauty mingles with pain in Tabasaran.

by Andy Shenk

The Tabasaran people, with a population of more than 130,000, live in the eastern Caucasus Mountains close to the Caspian Sea. This region is just inside the southern border of present-day Russia. The Tabasarans are historically Muslim. In 1996, my family moved there to engage in Christian friendship and offer Jesus' love. Our family and our supporting organization, Friends of the Tabasarans, wanted to love and serve human needs in the spirit of Jesus' compassion, develop a prayer network to pray for the Tabasaran people and, most of all, watch what God was doing and join in that. The following story took place during the summer of 2003. In the spring of 2005, however, our family was refused documents to remain in the region, and we have been based in the United States since then.

The day has finally come. I awake and peer out at a sun-drenched yard. Days of cloudless skies have baked hard the dirt roads. The village has been moving for hours now. Women milk their cows at the break of dawn, feed impatient chickens that burst out of their dank coops and squabble over bits of grain. Shepherds have guided their languid charges to distant hillsides and sit perched over river valleys that cut into the landscape. Family clans wearily approach potato fields and attack meddlesome weeds. Children, too much of a nuisance to work, revel in their freedom and punctuate the air with arguments over fútbol, stickball or little kittens. Tabasaran is alive, its people plowing through an existence of toil, pain, desperation interrupted occasionally by wild abandonment: vodka, weddings, guests and holidays.

Tabasaran is alive, its people plowing through an existence of toil, pain, desperation interrupted occasionally by wild abandonment: vodka, weddings, guests and holidays.

The day has come. Our house stirs. Mom begins her endless list of chores and preparations to be done before we can leave. After breakfast, dishes, housecleaning and food preparation, we wait. We check our supplies, everyone uses the outhouse, Dad locks the door, galoshes fit on slippered feet. We're off to the mountains; garden work, housework, animal work are left behind.

Our village, Bookhnog, is surrounded by hills and imposing ranges. To the west are the Jufdag mountains, to the east the mountains break and a dusty road slithers to the Caspian Sea. Northern and southern ranges are unbroken by mountain passes. Agamarad, a village friend, complements our family of six. The hike is not easy, as we must pass through two villages, Goomi and Djuli, while climbing several thousand feet for seven hours.

We enter Goomi and make our way through the village. There are few friends here, and my siblings and I hurry by suspicious old men our father and Agamarad greet with the traditional "A'salam aleikum." People will discuss our passing, but we're now free of the manure-speckled alleys and push on toward Djuli. My two brothers, Nathan and Jonathan, and my sister Rebekah toss frisbees with cool expertise as we ramble on about *The Lord of the Rings*, Cincinnati Reds baseball and village happenings.

To traverse Djuli we must descend to a bridge placed high above a rocky mountain stream and then climb up and around the ravine until we are on the opposite side of the ridge. Only my father and Agamarad have visited our destination for the night, the village of Atrik, which lies several thousand feet above Bookhnog. Atrik is at the edge of the tree line and at the foot of the Jufdag mountain range. Our ultimate destination, the top of the range, is for the next day.

Our trek takes us through dense woods, which often open onto precarious cliffs that drop sharply to the Rubas river, hundreds of feet below. Quiet streams cross our path on their rapid descents to the river. Later we journey through lush mountain pastures that stretch upward. By now our legs are exhausted, and we look eagerly over each hill for a sign of Atrik. Once there, only an excitable dog on the edge of the village notices our approach, and with tired steps we make our way to the home of our hosts. My father, who visited the village five years earlier, knows the head of the household. Despite our short notice, they greet us warmly and beg us to make ourselves at home. A meal is prepared, and we relax on soft cushions in a narrow downstairs room with a low ceiling.

Tragic news overshadows our arrival. The patriarch's nephew has just died in a freak car accident. The victim tried to escape his out-of-control car but was squashed by the vehicle after it flipped over on him. The young man, who was married and had children, was the head of the family due to the death of his father. Male relatives stoically go about preparing the funeral. Tradition dictates that they smother their emotions. Women suffer under no such obligations and fiercely mourn the cruelties of fate, which have stripped a family of their husband, father and son.

Despite the confusion and turmoil of a grieving household, however, they do not forget us. Ushered to an upstairs room covered with intricately designed carpets, we rest on feather pillows, secluded from the bustle of the house. Our meal arrives at 11 with profuse apologies for its delay, and our host, distressed that our visit should come at such a time of turmoil, spends the dinner conversing with us and explaining the details of the tragedy.

The next morning we must rise at dawn in order to ascend the mountain and still have time to hike down and return to Bookhnog by evening. Once again, our gracious host apologizes for not being able to accompany us on the hike but sends his son along to join us on the climb. The suffering of the village quiets us, yet we leave excitedly, anticipating the thrill of scaling the top of our Bookhnog horizon. Trees are far beneath us, and all we can see is slope after slope of green meadows, culminating in a barren ridge. Every hill we crest leads to another, and we wonder if we will ever get there.

I run ahead, impatient to conquer the ridge but held back by the desire to complete the hike as a group. On the steepest grades Rebekah and I clasp hands and pull each other up. My energy wanes after climbing several thousand feet in only a few hours. Tabasaran is like this; pain must come before the joy. Finally, we begin the final push. Snowbanks, preserved by the frigid mountain air, slake my thirst, and I charge up the hillside until there's no more to climb and I see the neighboring Aghul region spread out beneath me. The others join me, and we wonder at the change in the landscape below us. Snowcapped mountain ranges to the west and south expand our familiar village perspective, and to the east we can almost see the far-distant coast of the Caspian Sea.

To the east now, Tabasaran lies exposed, dozens of villages visible to the eye. This is my home. Beauty mingles with pain every day. In Atrik a child loses his father. The weeping is swept down an icy mountain stream. Water rushes through canyons, flows over rocky plains. Rowdy boys play in a crudely constructed dam, women wring out soggy laundry; a car roars through a ford, and the pain catches in the sputtering engine. Cursing men leap out of a smoky interior and argue about what must be done. "What must be done, what must be done?" the people cry. Escape if you can, get drunk if you can't. Work hard, die young: Is that all there is for this land?

Time wears on, and we scramble down the hills. Atrik welcomes us and pleads with us to stay for lunch. Generosity shines through all misfortune, and we accept the offer. Soon we're back on the road to Bookhnog. Dusk is coming as we stumble into the village. Weary feet rest as we drink black tea in our home. Tomorrow will come, and our lives with these people will journey on. We will live peacefully with these people we are called to love. I will live peacefully with these people I love so much. Maybe God's peace will shine in them through me. Maybe joy will be restored to Tabasaran's heart.

Andy Shenk is a freshman at Carleton College in Northfield, Minn. He is a member of Lifespring Community Church in Goshen, Ind.

My energy wanes after climbing several thousand feet in only a few hours. Tabasaran is like this; pain must come before the joy.

Will we follow Terah or Abraham?

Stanley Green is executive director of Mennonite Mission Network.

In a spurt of good intentions Ursula, my wife, and I bought a treadmill two years ago. Initially it got a rigorous workout, as did our bodies. When I got up to four miles a day, I was certain I would never go back to inactivity. Then I went on a trip and came back jet-lagged. For a few days I had no energy and a good excuse. The days became weeks, then months. Were it not for Ursula's discipline now, the treadmill could serve as a clothes hanger. But for her perseverance, the treadmill would be serving a purpose other than the one for which it was created.

Sometimes people also miss their destiny, and too often communities do as well. When Mennonite Church USA was born, God gave us the gift to explore our destiny as a community of those committed to follow Jesus. We discerned that our destiny was to be a people aligned with God's purposes in the world, a people who see what God is doing in the world and whose life and witness reflect God's dream for all of humanity. We said we wanted to be a people eager to "joyfully follow Jesus into the world." We have begun the journey. Ahead of us lies the promise.

History, however, is replete with examples of those who made a good beginning but became distracted from their destiny. I think of Terah, Abraham's father (Genesis 11:31-32). He began the journey to Canaan, though we're not sure why. Had Terah heard of Canaan as a "land flowing with milk and honey"? Was he an economic migrant? Or, like so many of our forebears, did he move for religious reasons? Sumerian civilization accommodated the institution of temple prostitutes (see *The Gift of the Jews* by Thomas Cahill). Perhaps Terah had such disgust with this practice that he felt compelled to remove his family.

En route to Canaan, Terah and his family came to an oasis in the desert called Haran. Terah was comfortable at the oasis in Haran and prospered greatly. His flocks grew, he gained many possessions, his family grew. He forgot his destiny, and Canaan became a nostalgic dream. After a secure and prosperous life, Terah died at 205. His name also died in the desert. We know him only by attribution to his son. Terah made a lifestyle choice, perhaps even a responsible choice. Abraham, by contrast, was chosen and called by God. He obeyed and walked with God toward full alignment with God's purposes, even though he sometimes stumbled and lost his way.

Whereas for Terah, and often for us, the default was family and clan or tribe, God's purpose for Abraham was that his vision extend to the families of the nations to whom he would bring blessing. Terah enjoyed the blessings of God on him and his family. Abraham was invited to more than a selfish enjoyment of God's blessings, often the root of exclusivity and wars, to sharing the blessings he received. God called Abraham to an enlarged understanding of family. His family would be one as "numerous as the stars in the night sky and as sand on the seashore" (Genesis 22:17-18). This is the family pictured in Revelation that comprises "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and people and languages" (7:9). Abraham's test at Mt. Moriah was a test of whether he was aligned with God's purposes or his own enjoyment of God's gift. Abraham not only had learned to trust God but was willing to do God's bidding without condition. God's purposes became paramount in Abraham's life.

Mennonites in North America have been blessed and have prospered. But are we being shaped by our lifestyle choices or living into the purposes of God to bring healing and hope to those who are hurting, and acceptance and welcome into the family of God for all those who are outside? Is our default family and tribe and clan, or has God's heart of love and compassion for the nations become our purpose? In 2001, we began with a clear sense of the destiny that was ours—to become a people willing to reach beyond ourselves as ambassadors of healing and hope. Will we become distracted and miss our destiny? Or will we realize that though the journey may be challenging we can enter into the promise of God?

Where will our journey as Mennonite Church USA lead us? Will we delight in the blessings God has poured out on us and our families or allow those blessings to overflow our lives as we share God's goodness with the "families of the nations"? We can either enjoy the oasis and its lure or we can journey toward the altar of our consecration to God's purposes. It is only as we continue to walk with God that we will enter the promise that is our destiny—"in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **A Honduras parable**—Cathy Chapman
- **Simple ways to live on less**—Susan Miller

MEDA convention focuses on Paraguay

New Web-based product will allow investors to deal directly with needy clients.

MEDA members traveled south for their 2006 convention in Florida, but the focus of the gathering was much farther south—on the country of Paraguay. MEDA—which stands for Mennonite Economic Development Associates—drew some 450 participants to its Nov. 2-5 convention in Tampa.

Mennonite refugees began settling Paraguay's Chaco ("Green Hell") region in 1927. The first MEDA project—a dairy—was started by the late Erie Sauder in the 1950s with a loan for an electric generator for the Mennonite community there. MEDA members helped start other projects later, such as a shoe factory and, more recently, several starch factories. According to Dan Sauder, Erie's grandson, half of all Paraguayans now get their milk from the Chaco region, and the biggest business in the region is exporting beef cattle.

But it is the future of Mennonites in Paraguay that drew the most attention because of a decision Mennonite World Conference made to hold its 2009 assembly there and the prominence of one member of the MWC family: María Gloria Penayo de Duarte. Paraguay's First Lady is a member of the Raíces (Roots) Mennonite Brethren Church in the capital city of Asunción.

"I have a strong sense of belonging as a Mennonite," Duarte said during her address to the convention. "In my country, when I say I am a Mennonite, people ask, 'Do you speak German?' and, 'Do you live in the Chaco?' I'll be so happy when Mennonite World Conference comes in 2009 because when Mennonites gather from all over the world [Paraguayans] will understand what it means to embrace the Mennonite faith."

Duarte told the story of her faith journey during the opening session on Nov. 2. But she and her entourage remained with the convention through the weekend, visiting with MEDA members (see photo) and talking to the local press. Duarte also joined a panel that explained why Mennonites should go to Paraguay in 2009 (see box).

Paraguay is one of many countries in which MEDA works, and the annual business session on Nov. 4 reviewed the organization's expansions of the last year.

According to MEDA president John Sauder and board chair John Yoder, MEDA now has partnerships with 173 organizations in 35 countries serving more than 2.6 million clients.

Financial results for the last year revealed additional expansion: total revenue increased by 25 percent to $13.7 million. According to the auditor's report, the organization concluded its most recent fiscal year with a $727,903 increase in unrestricted net assets. Total unrestricted net assets stood at $3.6 million on June 30.

Burton Buller

Paraguay's First Lady, María Gloria Penayo de Duarte (right), visits with MEDA member Gerald Gerbrandt. Duarte's translator, Sarah Luster, is in the middle.

Making small, entrepreneurial loans to poor and disenfranchised people is what MEDA calls micro-enterprise. MEDA members will soon be able to make those loans directly to clients through a new product called MEDA Trust.

"Each client will provide a description of the loan request," said Ed Epp, MEDA's vice president for resource development, when introducing the new product. "When a client makes a payment, an email is sent to you. If a client does not make a payment, you will suffer. You will suffer with the poor, just as MEDA does everyday."

Epp said MEDA plans to launch the new product in January. MEDA Trust will be available for three types of portfolios: individuals, organizations and groups.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Why go to Paraguay?

During a MEDA seminar, paraguay's First Lady, María Gloria Penayo de Duarte (see article), and Mennonite World Conference executive director Larry Miller were asked why Mennonites should go to Paraguay for MWC's global assembly in the capital city of Asunción July 13-19, 2009. Here are Miller's reasons:

1. It is Latin America's turn to host the world assembly; MWC has not had an assembly on that continent since 1972 in Brazil.
2. The Paraguayan church is the largest Mennonite group in South America.
3. It is "holy ground" in Mennonite history because of what happened there [with Mennonite refugees settling in the Chaco region as early as 1927]. Christians make pilgrimages to holy places and so should make a pilgrimage to this holy place.
4. It is a *kairos* moment. The First Lady's visit to the MEDA convention is an icon of that *kairos*.
5. It's heresy not to accept hospitality; we've been invited by the First Lady, and to not go would be civil disobedience.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Shebeen Queen serves Jesus, not beer

South African tavern owner gives up her livelihood to be faithful to God.

The Shebeen Queen stood over the card-playing regulars as immovable as the surrounding hills. She ordered them to get up and get out. The whining pleas of her drunken customers did not sway the 72-year-old South African matriarch's resolve. She was closing the doors of her shebeen (an unauthorized tavern) immediately and permanently.

What outrageous impulse pushed Patty-Joyce Msimang to shut down the sole source of livelihood for her extended family, children and grandchildren? She had decided to follow Jesus. But it wasn't a snap decision. No, Msimang had carefully counted the cost, a cost that included Zacchaeus-like humility and confession.

> I feel like someone who had been condemned to death but has been pardoned. I am no longer a slave to beermaking and the [tavern].
> —Patty-Joyce Msimang

She first heard God's call through two of her eight children. A daughter and son attended evangelistic meetings in Edendale, a sprawling township on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg. During one of these encounters organized by Patrick and Regina Dlamini, pastors of Breakthru Church International,, Mrs. Msimang's son, who was slowly dying, received prayer and gave his life to the Lord. "I began to pray a little, but not very seriously," Msimang says.

She tried to blend into the crowds at a revival meeting but knew one speaker was talking directly to her when he said, "Things may happen to you that make you think God doesn't love you. But he does."

Phil Lindell Detweiler of Mennonite Mission Network, who met Msimang in church and later visited her home, says, "Mrs. Msimang is a woman of sorrows and familiar with suffering. She has way outlasted her two husbands. Only two of her eight children are still alive, and in the fashion of gogos (grandmothers) here in Zulu culture she is raising many of her grandchildren."

Msimang, with a countercultural directness, told Lindell Detweiler that AIDS caused many of the deaths in her family.

Msimang desired baptism but wondered how she would feed her many dependents if she lived according to God's plan. After fasting and praying about her dilemma for a day, the answer came. She would have to close down the shebeen. Msimang immediately obeyed.

She didn't hesitate to take the next, equally difficult step in preparing for baptism. Msimang knew she needed to ask forgiveness from the wives and girlfriends of her former customers who were habitually abused when the men in their lives returned home from the shebeen. These women resented Msimang's complicity in their mistreatment so much that they refused to greet her when they encountered each other on the streets.

Phil Lindell Detweiler

Patty-Joyce Msimang, the former Shebeen Queen.

"I went to these houses where people treated me like an enemy and asked them for forgiveness," Msimang says. "I didn't know how I would be received."

One woman invited her in.

"We had a nice visit together," Msimang says.

Another woman cried as Msimang asked forgiveness. The two women embraced and prayed for each other. Msimang then encouraged the husband to care for his wife. He began to provide a bit of bread and margarine for her since he was not drinking away his whole salary at the shebeen.

A third woman gave Msimang a liter of Coke to thank her for her visit.

Msimang can now greet all of these women without shame when they meet.

"I feel like someone who had been condemned to death but has been pardoned," Msimang says. "I am no longer a slave to beermaking and the shebeen."

She still has two regrets—her age and her difficulty in getting around—both of which limit her ability to share Jesus and his transforming power.

"I am just sorry that I am so old. If I could do it, I would go to each and every house here in the area," she says. "I want to tell them that I am a new person."

Msimang is setting up a poultry business to support her family. She plans to sell eggs and chickens. In the meantime, the Dlaminis supplied her with a huge bag of mealie-meal, a cornmeal staple in southern Africa.

Although Msimang says the Lord has already provided for all her needs, she still has one request—that God would give her the strength to serve him.

"I only want to love the Lord," Msimang says. *—Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

Florida churches welcome 'snowbirds'

Winter visitors to Sarasota start ministries and serve as 'seasonal ministers.'

Creatures of habit, they come from far away, appearing the same time each year in the same locations. They are the snowbirds—winter visitors who travel from north to south—and for pastors in warm locations, they create wonderful opportunities and a few challenges.

Sunday attendance at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla., nearly quadruples from the summer months to the winter. At nearby Bay Shore Mennonite Church, winter visitors more than double the average Sunday population. Farther west, Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale, Ariz., swells by at least a third.

"During that time, the people actually shift," says Shane Hipps, pastor at Trinity. "Certain people who are year-round attendees come less frequently in the winter months. The winter visitors displace quite a few seats."

Those visitors, largely retirees fleeing northern chills, often travel to places where they have existing connections. In the process, they gray their destination congregation—sometimes significantly. For pastoral staff, this can turn into a new mission field. The newcomers, and repeat visitors, bring warmth and new life but also can mean more hospital visits and funeral arrangements, additional questioning about estates and end-of-life giving and the need to negotiate different styles of Bible study and Sunday school classes.

"There is an increase in staff load from custodians to pastoral staff and administration," says Bay Shore pastor Rocky Miller. "We're ready to take a breather in April and May. But I don't know that I'd look at that as being a downside. The biggest downside is that it simply fills us to capacity."

That means parking spaces are limited, the regulars' "regular" pews are taken and Sunday school classes are crammed in hallways. Not everyone appreciates the same style of music or worship leading. Still, Miller said, members of the Bay Shore congregation have refused to split into two services and continue to commit to weekday fellowship meals. They want to remain in community.

Bay Shore Church leadership emphasizes involving the visitors in ministry. Hazel Shirk, who recently retired as Bay Shore's special care pastor, annually recruited dozens of gifted temporary Floridians to take part in visiting hospitals, nursing homes and the chronically ill, as well as in calling other winter visitors who need special care.

Bay Shore consecrates these seasonal ministers in a special service so members know that their actions are on behalf of the entire congregation. Many of the volunteers do similar ministries at their permanent homes. Several years ago, one volunteer couple was assigned to visit a husband and wife who each suffered from dementia. It turned out the volunteer ministers had worked in doctors' offices and knew how to work through the medical system to acquire care, give support and help family members find a positive outcome.

Maarten Bos

Hazel Shirk (left) and Eileen Heintz pray together. Heintz is wearing a prayer blanket made by women at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla.

"I just would not have had the time," Shirk says. "God directed that in a special way."

A winter visitor also started a meaningful prayer blanket ministry at Bay Shore. Doris Zehr, who spends her summers in Grand Rapids, Mich., thought about Mennonite Women USA's outreach ministries that use quilts and blankets. She arranged to bring leftover fabric squares to a group of church quilters who created 18-inch-square blankets.

"It's just a piece of material until the brothers and sisters of Bay Shore write a small prayer or a Bible verse or a word of encouragement," Zehr says. When someone has a prayer need, groups gather around a blanket and pray. A pastor or a volunteer will then deliver the blanket and pray with it over the recipient. The blankets, Shirk says, can convey God's grace.

Shirk told of one man, bedfast, who asked every night to be draped with his prayer blanket. Zehr says the actions are meaningful for seniors who may feel alone in their winter homes when troubles arrive.

"Senior residents don't have their families down here. They don't have their children," she says. "So we have each other as family. At Bay Shore, they welcome the northerners like sisters and brothers coming back. We feel their happiness that we are there. "We surely don't take a vacation from serving the Lord, and that includes giving."—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

Congo war includes rape as a weapon

Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation meets victims, tells their stories.

Wendy Lehman

Christian Peacemaker Teams delegates Fatuma Dorothee Alinoti (left) and Unjin Lee (right) comfort a 12-year-old Congolese girl who survived rape.

A Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation of 11 women traveled to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Oct. 18 to Nov. 4 to meet with women who have experienced rape and sexual assault.

The delegation also met with women's organizations, human rights groups and churches working with them. The CPT delegation included women from the United States, the DRC, Colombia and Kenya.

Over the past decade, 4 million people have died as a result of war and conflict in the DRC—most due to preventable diseases and hunger. This is the highest death rate due to any conflict since World War II.

In 2002-2003, a transitional government was formed, and elections were held on July 30; they were the first democratic elections in 45 years. Runoff elections for president were held on Oct. 29, while the CPT delegation was in the DRC.

Yet violence has continued since 2003. Civilians are often the victims of militias and the DRC's national army. Women and children bear much of the violence. The number of women and girls raped is estimated at from 50,000 into the hundreds of thousands. At least 20 percent of the survivors are infected with HIV/AIDS.

We know men make war, so we must work together as women. —unidentified Congolese woman

Rape is used as a weapon of war against women and girls, which not only terrorizes them as the primary victims but tears communities apart. The survivors are often stigmatized and unwelcome back into their communities after these brutal attacks.

Women reported to the CPT delegation gang rapes, torture and murder of civilians, including cannibalism, committed by the Mai Mai, Tutsi rebel groups and the Interahamwe—the Hutu militia chiefly responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide but now reluctant or unable to return to Rwanda because of its Tutsi-led government.

The trauma on the whole family and community is magnified by the public nature of many of these rapes and other forms of torture—committed in front of husbands, children and other community members. Moreover, women who tend and harvest the fields and collect water are afraid to do so, as this is often where these attacks occur, so the community suffers significantly economically.

Upon consultation with church leaders in the DRC, CPT sent this delegation of women to hear their stories because it is women who are largely affected by the conflict and because Congolese say few outside Africa know about what is happening to them.

The delegation met with women in cities, villages in rebel-controlled territory, churches and hospitals. Even though the stories they heard are brutal, women the delegation spoke with wanted them told, hoping for a change in international policy toward Congo.

The international community bears a heavy responsibility in this conflict, benefiting economically through various networks from the destabilization of the region.

In 2000, the U.N. Security Council set up a panel of experts to examine how business leaders, military leaders and others fueled the conflict in the Congo in order to exploit its resources, which include gold, diamonds and 80 percent of the world's coltan ore—a key mineral used in computers and cell phones.

In 2002, this panel cited 85 multinational companies for violating international norms in their purchase of resources, including eight U.S.-owned companies.

Yet despite the seemingly overwhelming complexities of the conflict, the CPT delegation also met with groups seeking creative solutions to help ease the conflict and empower women. One association of women in Bukavu celebrated International Women's Day every year.

In 2000, they celebrated the International Day Without Women, to stage a protest; they all stayed home, but from their homes they wrote reports about what was happening to women and contacted news stations.

Even though many women spoke of rebel groups coming from Rwanda, this group emphasized that they collaborate with women in Rwanda and Burundi. One woman said, "We know men make war so we must work together as women." *—Wendy Lehman of Christian Peacemaker Teams*

AIDS worker says church must respond

Global church is growing four times faster than infection rate for HIV/AIDS.

Beth Good loves to challenge church leaders around the world to "step up to the plate" and face the HIV/AIDS pandemic. An Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) catalyst for HIV/AIDS initiatives, Good traveled to the Philippines and Thailand Sept. 5-15 to lead workshops for church leaders and visit AIDS ministries.

"I want to convey to mission and church leaders not only the importance but the absolute necessity of the church being involved in the global fight against HIV/AIDS," Good says.

At the Holy Spirit in Mission Conference in the Philippines, Good introduced a training manual for church workers that she wrote. When one leader asked, "But what does this have to do with us?" Good said, "Everything."

"In order to address a rapidly growing pandemic, there must be a distribution network growing faster than the pandemic," Good says. "And the only force on earth that is as far-reaching as the HIV/AIDS pandemic is the church. In the world there are 2.1 billion people who claim to follow Christ. That is the largest 'organization' on the planet—bigger than McDonalds or the World Health Organization. Each day nearly 14,000 people are newly infected with HIV. But the church is growing daily at the rate of 60,000—four times faster than the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Good says that Kenya has recorded approximately 1.4 million children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Kenya also claims to have 80,000 Christian churches. Doing the math shows that if each church in Kenya would "adopt" 17 AIDS orphans, their needs could be met through the churches in their home communities.

In a slum in Nairobi, Kenya, the Mathari Mennonite Church began Menno Kids Academy—an outreach to the many orphaned and vulnerable children in its neighborhood. This has grown from just a handful of children to 28 students who get a free education and two meals a day.

In Thailand, Good met with the AIDS visitation team from the Life Enrichment Churches, a circle of churches begun by EMM workers.

"I was struck by the truly holistic ministry of this body of believers," Good says. "When I asked why they started the ministry, pastor Joi pondered a moment, then answered, 'When the hospital asked us to become involved, we felt compassion for those who were sick and dying because of AIDS. We also knew that everyone needs to know the salvation of Jesus Christ, so we felt compelled to share Jesus with them as well. I guess it's difficult to separate the two.'"

On one of the team's visits, Good says she watched in awe as a dim light flickered in the eyes of an emaciated form lying on a raised platform that served as a bed. The fact that a group of people from the hospital and the church would come to visit and encourage him in his diseased state seemed unbelievable to him.

Sandy Achenbach

To illustrate that condoms are only 85 percent effective, HIV/AIDS worker Beth Good put M&Ms in a bowl and offered them to Wiang (right) and Pensii (left); just before the Thai women reached for the candy, Good said, "Several of the candies are poisoned. I'm not sure which ones. But the rest are fine."

"When we made home visits with the church's team," Good says, "we saw them not only minister to the AIDS patients but to whole households. We watched ... as the team leader answered questions about the differences between Christianity and Buddhism and briefly gave a creation-to-cross history lesson. We witnessed a ministry that enveloped the total health of an individual, a family and a community. It's what I like to call complete evangelism."—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

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Ethiopian church accepts polygamists

Rationale based on 1 Timothy 3:2 and the welfare of women and children

Historic votes at the Meserete Kristos Church General Assembly Oct. 6-7 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, set new policies on two issues: the first regarding baptism of polygamous converts and the second regarding women in leadership. MKC delegates also approved a new constitution, replacing one dating from January 1999.

A bishop must be … the husband of one wife.
—from 1 Timothy 3:2

The assembly approved a task force recommendation in favor of baptizing polygamous converts but restricting them from leadership positions. Polygamy, a form of marriage in which a man has more than one wife, is common throughout Africa and in many countries around the world.

Previous MKC policy denied baptism to polygamous converts. Advocates of the change in policy quoted from 1 Timothy 3:2 (King James), "A bishop must be … the husband of one wife," as evidence that the early church had polygamous members and that they were restricted from leadership.

A priority for evangelism played a role in the church's decision to baptize polygamous converts. Delegates heard testimony from regional church leaders stating that the church's witness would be handicapped by denying baptism to polygamous converts, especially in Muslim areas.

"This decision shows concern for the community, especially for the wives and the children who are affected," says General Secretary Mulugeta Zewdie. Experience has shown that church teaching that required polygamists to divorce multiple wives often caused extensive suffering for the women and children affected.

Monogamous marriage continues to be the teaching position of the church. Policy regarding church members who take a second wife will remain the same as in the past. "Their membership will be cancelled," Zewdie says.

In a separate vote, delegates approved a recommendation in favor of women holding congregational office on the basis of gifts and election. This includes salaried offices—such as evangelist, teacher and pastor—as well as unsalaried offices such as deacon and elder.

Prior to this vote, there was no official policy, but tradition and custom discouraged the election of women to recognized roles in congregational leadership. Leaders of the underground church of the 1980s had identified a need for policy on this subject but had tabled a decision until further enlightenment. The MKC has 144,604 baptized members in 398 congregations and 785 church planting centers.—*Holly Blosser Yoder for Mennonite Central Committee and Eastern Mennonite Missions*

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Bridge builders needed in Middle East

Says Archbishop Chacour, head of largest Christian community in Israel

He's not an imposing-looking man. But each time he took the podium, he didn't mince words. But neither did he belittle his hearers. In turn, the audience was often visibly moved.

Archbishop Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Arab, Christian and citizen of the modern state of Israel, brought his call for human understanding and practical response to the protracted conflict in the Middle East to the Harrisonburg, Va., area Oct. 23-25. He addressed a service club, an interdenominational pastors group, students and faculty at two local universities and the broader community.

In every setting during his three-day visit, Chacour underscored the critical need for active peacebuilding in his strife-torn region.

"Every time you take the side of one of the peoples here, you become just one more enemy to the other," he said. "What is needed are bridge builders who start in the middle to reach each side. Humanity today is waging war against an idea—against terrorism—that when responded to with violence only breeds more violence.

"Help stop the generalizations—calling persons radicals, fanatics, terrorists," Chacour pleaded. "Don't condemn an entire people because of the actions of some who act out of desperation in Palestine, in the Gaza Strip, in the refugee camps. Peace needs no contemplators. It needs actors, persons who are willing to get their hands dirty, to be salt and light, connecting people with each other and to God."

Chacour, a three-time nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, is president and founder of Mar Elias Educational Institutions in the Galilee area of Israel. The school system serves 3,000 young people—aged kindergarten through college—from the major faith traditions in that area of the world: Muslims, Christians, Druze and Jews.

"We don't need more Christian groups coming to view the historic sites of the Holy Land," Chacour said. "What we need is your friendship, for you to stand in solidarity and to build bridges to people on all sides of this conflict, whether Muslim, Jewish or Christian. Go to your own Galilee and serve others, forgive them and help them live together in peace," he said.

Born in British-ruled Palestine in 1939, Chacour and his family became homeless in 1947, when all residents of their Christian-Palestinian village were evicted by Israeli authorities. Nonetheless, he said, "I have forgiven my Jewish brothers and sisters."

Last February, Chacour was elevated to the rank of archbishop in the Melkite Catholic Church, known as Eastern (Byzantine) or Greek Catholics. Since the early 18th century they have recognized the authority of the Roman Pope and have tended to follow his guidance in church matters. As archbishop, Chacour is head of the largest Christian community in Israel with a flock of more than 50,000 members in the northern region.—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University*

> We don't need more Christian groups coming to view the historic sites of the Holy Land. . . . Go to your own Galilee and serve others.
> —Elias Chacour

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WORKERS

Bontrager, Clara, was commissioned as chaplain to assist the pastor in visitation work at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz., on Nov. 5.

Drescher, John M., joined Quakertown Mennonite School as campus pastor in September.

Galati, Mauro A., ended a term as interim pastor at Rohrerstown (Pa.) Mennonite Church on Sept. 3.

Hoover, Dwayne A., was licensed as associate pastor at Carpenter Community Church, Talmage, Pa., on Sept. 17.

Mears Driedger, June, ended a term as pastor at Michigan State University Mennonite Fellowship, East Lansing, Mich., on Oct. 31.

Troyer, Meribeth, was commissioned as chaplain to assist the pastor in visitation work at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz., on Nov. 5.

Wiebe, Peter B., was commissioned as chaplain to assist the pastor in visitation work at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz., on Nov. 5.

Yoder, Daniel, was ordained as pastor at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind., on Oct. 22.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Beidler, Ezra Lucas, Oct. 24, to Ken and Elaine Shenk Beidler, Iowa City, Iowa.

Bohnert, Paxton Charles, July 13, to Allen L. Bohnert and Melanie Mishler, Columbus, Ohio.

Candelaria, Gabriella Sofia, Oct. 11, to J. Fabian Candelaria and Cristina Galan, Iowa City, Iowa.

Early, Oliver Niklas, Oct. 28, to Christian and AnnMarie Early, Harrisonburg, Va.

English, Gavin Thomas, Oct. 11, to John and Tina Widmer English, Fresno, Calif.

Feikert, Timothy Randall, Oct. 20, to Michael and Amanda Mast Feikert, Millersburg, Ohio.

Hoiting-Glick, Sebastian Hendrick, Oct. 7, to Jan Hoiting and Anne K. Glick, New York, N.Y.

Huebert-Stauffer, Russet Sawyer, Sept. 14, to Christopher and Miriam Huebert-Stauffer, Canton, Kan.

Meyer, Joel Patrick, Oct. 2, to Jay and Rachel Harnagel Meyer, Wayland, Iowa.

Miller, Trevor Paul, Oct. 17, to Kevin and Jenny Riegsecker Miller, Middlebury, Ind.

Nafziger, Linus Derner, Oct. 17, Adam Nafziger and Nicole Fitch, Minneapolis, Minn.

Nickel, Ethan Johns, Oct. 23, to Kevin and Kendra Johns Nickel, Harrisonburg, Va.

Towsey, Ariela Kay, Sept. 7, to Leslie and Carla Weaver Towsey, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Wagler, Emma Kay, Aug. 28, to Curt and Lori Brown Wagler, Wayland, Iowa.

Witmer-Rich, Charlotte Hannah, March 16, to Jonathan and Maria Witmer-Rich, Richmond Heights, Ohio.

Yeackley, Izabelle Sue, Sept. 8, to Travis and Tracy Schweitzer Yeackley, Milford, Neb.

Yoder, Ian David, Oct. 31, to Brent and Heidi Wenger Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

MacAleese/Martin: Katie MacAleese, Columbiana, Ohio, and Brian Martin, Columbiana, July 29 at First Presbyterian Church, Columbiana.

Miller/Miller: Andrew Miller, Salunga, Pa., and Lana Miller, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 12 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller/Raber: Ashley Miller, Dundee, Ohio, and Brian Raber, Millersburg, Ohio, Oct. 21 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Nimershiem/Ressler: Barbara Nimershiem, Lancaster, Pa., and Wendell Ressler, Lancaster, June 17 on the campus of Franklin and Marshall College.

Peifer/Shenk: Kelly Peifer, Lancaster, Pa., and Dave Shenk, Lancaster, Pa, June 25 at Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster.

DEATHS

Bare, John S., 92, Lititz, Pa., died Oct. 25. Spouse: Nettie Bare. Parents: Martin S. and Mamie Shreiner Bare. Children: Mervin, Bernice Myers, Patricia Shellenberger, Veronica Mienheartt; 12 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand, Pa.

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Choma, Rosalia M. Keehner, 73, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Joseph Choma (deceased). Parents: Martin and Mabel Sturgeon Keehner. Children: Christine Kennel, Gregory; four grandchildren. Memorial service: Sept. 23 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana, Ohio.

Hoober, Aaron J., 65, Shipshewana, Ind., died Oct. 27 of cancer. Spouse: Mary Jane Kreider Hoober. Parents: Aaron and Esther Snyder Hoober. Children: Lin, Brent, Kristen Hoober; four grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 31 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Mast, Ruth I. Mennom, 87, Orrville, Ohio, died Oct. 25. Spouse: Glenn Mast (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Elizabeth Hadley Mennom. Children: Dr. H Linn, Eric, Randall, Kevin; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Gresser Funeral Home, Orrville.

Miller, Ruth Stutzman, 93, Hesston, Kan., died Oct. 18. Spouse: Norman Miller (deceased). Parents: Andrew J. and Fannie Troyer Stutzman. Children: Margaret Winsinger, Larry, Keith; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Neufeld, Daniel E., 90, Inman, Kan., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Esther H. Ensz (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Anna Ediger Neufeld. Children: Fred, Donald, Michael, Ted, Mary Neufeld; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Pankratz, Henry J., 95, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 3. Spouse: Elsie Penner Pankratz. Parents: Jacob and Helena Harder Pankratz. Children: Lenore Waltner, Louise Kreider, Barbara Fast, Stanley; 12 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 27 at College Mennonite Church. Memorial service: Nov. 11 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Pfamatter, Richard Wayne, 61, Harrisonburg, Va., died Nov. 2 of a massive heart attack. Spouse: Linda May Pfamatter. Parents: Edgar and Gladys Armentrout Pfamatter. Children: Gale LeAnn Bernatz, Richard Wayne, Jr., Suzanne Perl; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Schweitzer, Merlin, 84, Friend, Neb., died Sept. 26 of heart disease and cancer. Spouse: Lois Miller Schweitzer. Parents: Lee and Elma Stutzman Schweitzer. Children: Carolyn Peters, Shirley Spohn; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 30 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

Trousdell, Bertha Grove., 89, Newport News, Va., died Oct. 4. Spouse: Paul Trousdell (deceased). Parents: Issac E. and Emma W. Grove. Funeral: Oct. 10 at W.J. Smith and Son Funeral Home, Newport News.

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Candidates must have a bachelor's degree in building construction and management, engineering, business or a related field as well as experience indicating professional growth. Excellent written, verbal, analytical, interpersonal and supervisory skills are required. Review of applications begins immediately and accepted until the position is filled. Campus information can be found at www.bluffton.edu. Deadline for accepting materials is Dec. 15, 2006. Interested individuals should send a cover letter, resumé, employee application (available online), and names and contact information for three references to: Julie Krupp, Director of Human Resources, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all qualified applicants who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse it.

Goshen College seeks applicants or nominations for a full-time, one-year ***communication professorship*** during the 2007-08 school year. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Franklin Mennonite Conference is accepting applications until Nov. 30 for a ***half-time minister for youth and young adults***. FMC is comprised of 14 congregations located in south-central Pennsylvania and northern Maryland. For further information contact Darrell Baer at 717-375-4544 or frmc@earthlink.net.

Frazer (Pa.) Mennonite Church, located 25 miles west of Philadelphia, is seeking a ***full-time pastor***. Frazer is a suburban congregation of 125 members that desires an experienced pastor who is gifted in preaching and teaching and who shares our vision for community outreach, peace and justice ministries and active lay leadership. Please visit frazermennonite.org or contact Larry Massanari at 610-524-8332 or lmassanari@aol.com.

Philadelphia Mennonite High School, a dynamic and innovative urban high school, is in the search process for an ***assistant principal***. Candidates with a vibrant Christian faith and teaching and/or administrative experience are encouraged to apply. Please direct inquiries/resumé to Dr. Barbara Moses, Principal, 860 N. 24th St., Philadelphia, PA 19130, phone 215-769-5363; fax 215-769-4063; email mos147@comcast.net.

Communication: **Bluffton University** invites applications for a full-time tenure-track ***faculty position in communication*** to begin fall 2007. Academic preparation in communication, mass communication, journalism or related field. Ph.D. preferred; A.B.D. or M.A./M.F.A. with professional experience considered. Terminal degree required for tenure. Evidence of excellence in teaching and ability to mentor students. Teach a combination of courses from such areas as mass media, journalism, broadcasting, media production, electronic communication, new media and public relations. Advise student newspaper and campus FM radio station. Possibly develop an on-campus television station. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Review of applications begins Jan. 8, 2007, and continues until an appointment is made. Send letter of interest, curriculum vita or resumé, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or if necessary from placement office) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. See www.bluffton.edu. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

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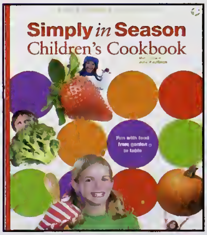
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Pigeon River Mennonite Church is seeking a ***full-time pastor*** who loves to encourage members to use their gifts, delegates responsibilities and enjoys teaching the Word. Located near Pigeon, Mich., we are a congregation of 180 seeking the heart of God. We are currently focused on building bridges to the unchurched, developing more small groups and utilizing our gifts. Contact Gerry Swartzendruber at 7691 Pigeon Road, Pigeon, MI 48755, or waygers@hotmail.com, phone 989-453-3088.

Biology, (tenure-track, to begin August 2007) **Bethel College**, North Newton, Kan. Duties include upper- and lower-level undergraduate teaching, advising and the development of a research program involving students. Particular expertise in the areas of molecular biology, genetics, neurobiology and/or developmental biology desired. Ph.D required. For complete application details see www.bethelks.edu/hr/openings/. AA/EOE.

Eastern Mennonite University announces ***full-time continuing faculty position*** in business, with emphasis in marketing, information systems or management, beginning Fall 2007. Ph.D. or D.B.A. preferred; Ph.D. candidates considered. Master's degree and industry experience required; teaching experience ideal. Applicants must be willing and able to teach courses in marketing, management and/or information systems, with specific courses to be determined. Other responsibilities include student advising, university service and professional experience/scholarship. Salary and rank determined by education and experience. EMU uses an extended contract system. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, vice president and undergraduate academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; www.emu.edu. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. Review begins Jan. 1, 2007. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversty.

Interim associate pastor (during search for long-term pastor): **Hyattsville Mennonite Church** (www.hyattsvillemennonite.org) is an urban congregation committed to making Anabaptist traditions and beliefs relevant in the cultural setting of the Washington, D.C., area. Applicant would work with lead pastor for a term of 9-12 months. For more information contact Chair of the Search Committee: Tim Wiens, 301-949-8628, ext. 105 or interimpastorsearch@hyattsvillemennonite.org.

Iowa Mennonite School is seeking nominations and applications for a new ***administrator***. IMS is a high school with a vibrant atmosphere, stable and mature faculty and excellent facilities. IMS is deeply committed to delivering a secondary education embedded in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. Letters of application and nominations may be submitted to Atlee Yoder, Search Committee Chair, 1453 540th St. SW, Kalona, IA 52247, phone 319-656-5191, email atleeyod@kctc.net. Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

Waynesboro Mennonite Church is seeking a half-time to full-time person to serve as ***minister of youth and Christian education***. We are located 30 miles south of Harrisonburg, Va., an easy drive for those interested in attending Eastern Mennonite Seminary. For information contact Howard Miller, Pastor, at 540-949-0446 or pastorhoward@ntelos.net.

West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship is a creative urban Anabaptist community seeking a ***full-time pastor***. We are a 20-year-old congregation with an average attendance of 80 consisting primarily of young adults and families. Members are active in leading worship, preaching and all aspects of church ministries. For more information about the church go to www.wpmf.com; for more information about the pastor position contact Drick Boyd 610-341-4360.

Dr. Charles H. Zimmerman, professor of biblical theology at Biblical Theological Seminary, is the ***men's retreat*** speaker at **Spruce Lake Retreat**, Jan. 18-19, 2007. A gifted communicator, Charles will invite men to "Live the Legacy, A Life Without Regret," making biblical principles clear and relevant. Special pastors' discount, plus reduced rate for reservations made by Dec. 15, 2006. Call 800-822-7505. Located in the Pocono Mts. of northeastern Pa., www.sprucelake.org.

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The state (or dynamic) of Mennonite writing

Gordon Houser

At the conference "Mennonite/s Writing: Beyond Borders," held Oct. 26-29 at Bluffton (Ohio) University, three Mennonite writers—Jeff Gundy, Ann Hostetler and Hildi Froese Tiessen—spoke to the question, "State of the Art?" All three, I imagine, would say that Mennonite writing is not in stasis but is dynamic, always changing.

Why should we care about Mennonite writing, particularly creative writing? Answering that adequately requires much more space than is available here, but let me say in brief that art speaks to us holistically, to our heart as well as our head. It also often challenges us in ways we may not find comfortable. As Gundy said, art's goal is to "lay bare the questions hidden by the answers."

At the same time, he went on, "imaginative literature feeds the soul." Hostetler added that "the church needs writers to show it at its worst and at its best."

Tiessen spoke more historically about Mennonite (or Mennonites) writing. She pointed out that this was the fourth such conference. Previous ones were held in 1990 in Waterloo, Ont., and in 1997 and 2002 at Goshen (Ind.) College.

She noted that in Canada "Mennonite writing is flourishing." Among the most successful and well-known "Mennonite" writers are those who grew up in a Mennonite milieu but call themselves "secular Mennonites." This works, Tiessen said, because Mennonite is a cultural identity in Canada. This helps explain the ambiguous "/s" in the title. Some "Mennonite writing" is not by people who are part of Mennonite churches.

In the United States, with a population 10 times that of Canada, Mennonites are but a speck, if that, on the radar. But this conference focused more on writing than on national identities.

The conference began with a keynote lecture by author Kathleen Norris: "Everyday Mystery: A Religious Life in the Real World," which explored the relevance of religion and spirituality in the tasks of daily life. She opened her talk with a quote from Mary Oliver's poem "Messenger"—"My work is loving the world." It is every being's work to love the world, Norris said, not merely through poetry or writing but by remaining open to discovering the sacred within the day-to-day.

Norris offered some definitions: "Writers are people who are in the habit of writing." "Poetry is free; it doesn't try to persuade." She used the word "acedia," the inability to care, to describe our society. "We are terminally distracted," she said.

Norris questioned how to live a religious life in the real world, where it is easy to become consumed by routine, oblivious to surroundings. Norris said the key to finding truth and holiness in life is to recognize that each moment is a gift of immense beauty. "Life is fleeting," she said. "The present moment is a treasure beyond price. "

More than 250 people attended the conference, which included nearly 90 presentations from writers across the continent. Featured writers and critics included Gundy, Tiessen, Hostetler, Rudy Wiebe, Jean Janzen, John Ruth, Di Brandt, Julia Spicher Kasdorf, G.C. Waldrep, David Waltner-Toews, Keith Ratzlaff, Nathan Bartel, J.L. Conrad, Todd Davis, Cheryl Denise, David Elias, Rhoda Janzen, Janet Kauffman, Joanne Lehman, Evie Yoder Miller, Leonard Neufeldt, Barbara Nickel, Shari Wagner, David Wright, Yorifumi Yaguchi and many others.

Mennonite writing is alive and growing.

FILMS

Flags of Our Fathers (R) shows both the destructive effects of war and how it draws men into such a close community that they risk their lives for each other. The film follows three surviving men of the six captured raising a flag at Iwo Jima in the famous World War II photo. The U.S. government brings them back to help raise money for the war effort. They feel shame at being lauded falsely as heroes, yet they do raise money. The film honors the young men who died in that battle while also depicting the ugly haphazard brutality of war. Less subtle than it could have been, the excessive narration weakens it.

One Night With the King (PG) is based on the biblical story of Esther, though it takes anachronistic liberties with its talk of democracy and its sensitive Persian king. The presence of a few good actors, handicapped by a poor script, cannot save a film that is part Harlequin romance, part sermon. Read the Bible instead.

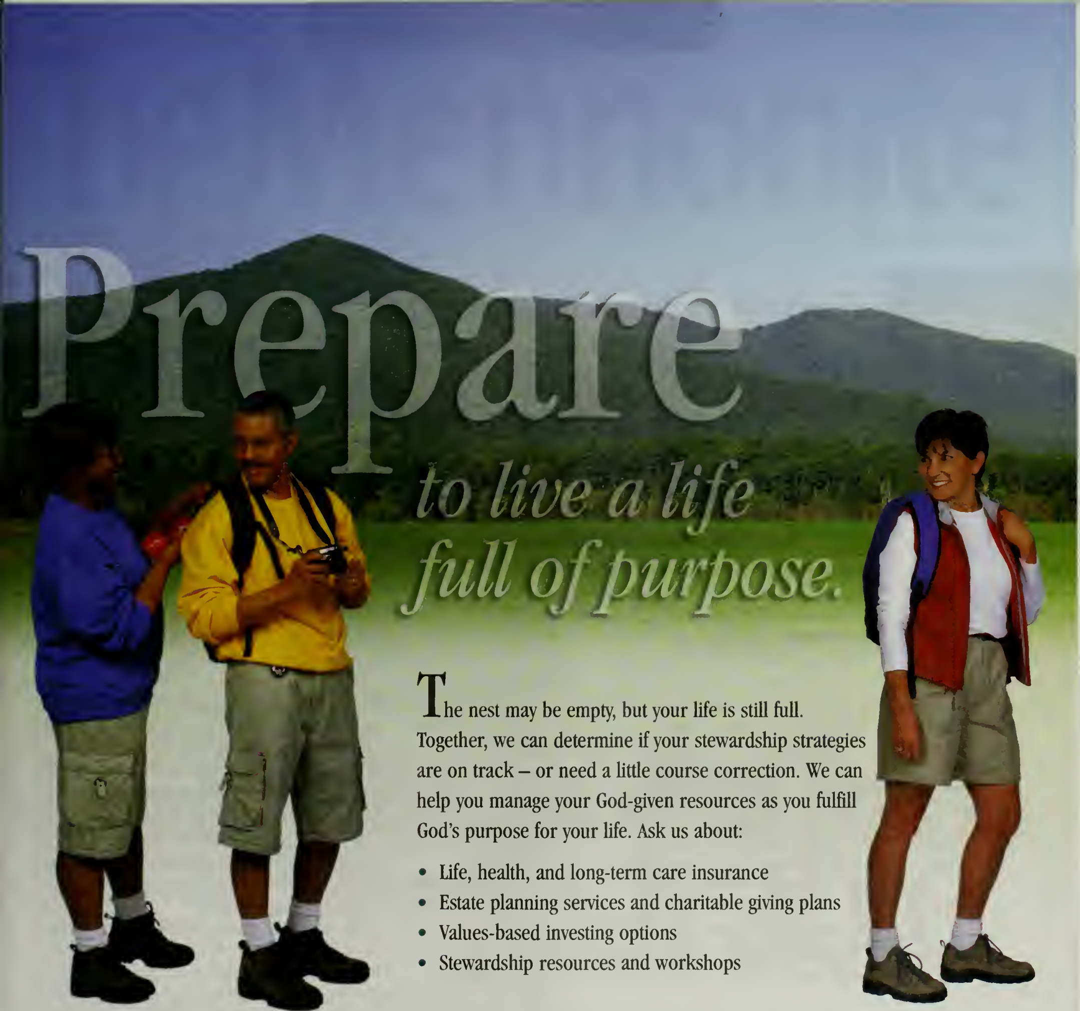
The Queen (PG-13) is a funny yet poignant film about Britain's Queen Elizabeth II around the time of Princess Diana's death in 1997. Helen Mirren is outstanding in the title role. The mix of actual events and imagined dialogue among the royal family shows the strain of such a public and symbolic role. The film artfully critiques and humanizes the monarchy.

BOOKS

From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy by Matthew Dickerson and David O'Hara (Brazos Press, 2006, $19.99) explores the influence and importance of biblical narrative, Greek mythology, Arthurian legend and other works of "Faërie" on our literary culture. While many think of "myth" as untrue, the authors see myth, at its best, as "both a distant view into the whole and a close mirror of the personal."

Shouts and Whispers: Twenty-One Writers Speak About Their Writing and Their Faith, edited by Jennifer L. Holbert (Eerdmans, 2006, $15), will appeal most to Christians interested in writing or in literature. Yet much of what these writers share applies to any vocation. Frederick Buechner writes about seeing with the heart. In an interview, Kathleen Norris speaks about community and witness. David James Duncan writes of the need to face the wounds of our childhood.

Transforming the Powers: Peace, Justice and the Domination System, edited by Ray Gingerich and Ted Grimsrud (Fortress Press, 2006, $20), collects 11 essays by seven writers that interact with Walter Wink's trilogy on the "principalities and powers." The writers apply his analysis to economics, politics and government, warmaking and peacemaking, personal ethics, and ecological and social justice.



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Everett J. Thomas

Cigarette smoke in church

If I had to put a face on Mennonite missions, it would belong to Cheshire "Ray" Tharpe. Everybody loved Ray, and the memorial service on Oct. 29 for this "evangelist" consisted mostly of his friends from Alcoholics Anonymous explaining why Ray meant so much to them.

My first memory of Ray was cigarette smoke. This former Marine drill sergeant started dropping off his wife Ola at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., about 20 years ago. When he came to pick her up, Ray stood outside the front door, smoking if the service went overtime. On summer days the smoke drifted through the open windows and into our hymns and prayers.

With special encouragement from their only child, Ray eventually joined Ola and son Michael in church. Ray was baptized on May 6, 1990.

Not long after Ray quit smoking, the doctors told him he had an inoperable tumor in his lungs—and less than a year to live. That was more than 10 years ago. Every day Ray lived afterward was a miracle; if you asked him how things were going, that is what he would say. As one woman said at his memorial service, the joy he felt living as a Christian each new day gave him a grin as big as the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland.*

Ray quickly got involved in congregational life and six years ago asked whether the church building could be used for the Alcoholics Anonymous meetings he had been attending for 14 years. Since then, the building has been used as a home for Ray's group.

If we open our doors, we will be transformed by the fire of God's Spirit working through those who walk in.

Ray's joy spread into the congregation and was most evident by the hugs he distributed without discrimination. I remember them with affection. I also remember the Sunday our 10-year-old daughter complained that it had not been a good day at church because she didn't get her usual hug and kiss from Ray.

Ray had opinions about many matters and was willing to share them in his jovial way. Sometimes he talked a lot; several people at the memorial service teased his wife Ola about how often she would roll her eyes at some of the things Ray said or when he talked too much.

But Ray's effervescence was infectious. There was just no way not to smile at this good-natured man with a booming bass voice whose faith was still childlike. There was a purity in his testimony. Somehow the joy of Ray's salvation made all kinds of other matters seem less important. It brought new life and energy into the congregation. It also reminded us of the gift we have as Christians when we are willing to share the gospel with people who need it.

November is designated Missions Month in Mennonite Church USA. But when we talk about missions, sometimes we are too distracted by questions about doctrine. (Should someone who was baptized as an infant—and then left the church—be baptized again as an adult?)

We can be too worried about the backgrounds that newcomers bring with them. (Will our peace witness be weakened if a popular member of the congregation was a Marine?)

We can even major on minor issues. (Are hugs and kisses inappropriate in church?)

The real miracle is that people new to faith bring new life to a church. Whether a middle-aged adult who comes to faith for the first time or a teenager whose faith was nurtured through years of Christian education, they often are the unfurling edges of congregational life.

The same is true for our denomination and for the global Mennonite family. We know that the fastest-growing parts of our denomination are in places where congregations minister to and attract new Christians. Similarly, the growing parts of the worldwide Mennonite family are in the global South, where newcomers flock to congregations, welcoming their beginning, childlike faith.

How will these growth edges change us? How will we respond when cigarette smoke seeps into our holy moments? If we open our doors, we will be transformed by the fire of God's Spirit working through those who walk in.—*ejt*

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Singleness of heart, wholeness of community

Kenneth Thompson is pastor of Friendship Community Church, Bronx, N.Y.

Recently I attended a worship service at a local homeless men's shelter led by a singing group. A couple behind me said: "They sound good, but they always leave before nightfall. They don't know how we live here." This couple saw a singing group visit, sing and leave without touching the people who live there. I introduced myself, shook hands and said, "There are Mennonites here in the city who care. We know how you're living because we live here, too." We parted with a smile, a prayer and a promise to talk again, to share in the Word and worship of Jesus Christ.

At times discussions about God in a public forum are so ecumenical that they lose any evangelical importance. Significant theological and sociological implications are muted by superficial pronouncements in the interest of courtesy and correctness. Pietism that masks situational ethics, moralistic philosophizing or prejudiced apologetics—veiled in sanctimonious posturing and robed in the nice garments of religiosity—too often passes for genuine biblical faith in God.

At the other extreme are those who trumpet their angry words of truth to power so loudly their sound drowns out any opportunity for people to listen. They forget that God's truth is most effective when spoken from the lips of one with the heart of a worshiper. And like that couple, people wonder if anyone really connects with their situation.

Anabaptism has the potential to promote the person, power and purpose of Jesus Christ. We have this insight: Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God and his place in it, forever identifying himself and his message as one. He didn't simply proclaim truths—he personified Truth. Through Jesus Christ, God has entered into humanity's struggle, participates in our rise, commits his strength and devotion toward our well-being and anticipates the cooperative venture of his grace and truth joining our faith and patient continuance to yield the great promises of redemption for life and community.

Christianity is unique because of the bold declaration of faith that God's omniscience is equaled by his compassion, his omnipresence is focused in relationship, and his omnipotence is tempered by his mercy and lovingkindness. In Jesus, deity interacted with humanity, eternity impacted mortality, and the sovereign reign of God is enrobed in the humility of a servant heart.

While many align with issues, we are in allegiance with Immanuel, professing a spirituality that truly believes in the active presence of God with us. We seek not merely to be driven by causes but by the direction of Christ. Mennonites can demonstrate that life at its best is lived to God's glory and to the well-being of others.

But if we resort to the comforts of choruses and hymns sung in four-part harmony and spiritualize life's challenges through contemplative homilies and lighted candles but fail to present Jesus Christ to people at their point of need, we risk becoming socially irrelevant and largely dismissed as a peculiar cultural collective. To express our faith in a prayerful heart of worship in the sanctuary yet fail to define that faith through demonstrated presence in the local community is to abandon the liberating theme of the gospel and its communal implications. We see in Jesus not only a spiritual zeal for the Temple's purity and the power of prayer but his passion for a social vision of justice and provision for the poor, the oppressed, the dissatisfied and distressed. He promoted singleness of heart and wholeness of community equally in his vision of the kingdom of God in the earth.

When anyone wonders if God cares, let's be ready to say and to show he does.

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 23, December 5, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Web site: www.TheMennonite.org

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

1251 Virginia Ave.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
phone: 540-434-2556
fax: 540-434-5556

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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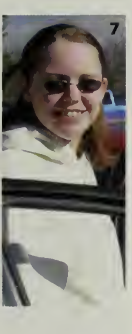

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Sharing in worship

I appreciated both Arthur Paul Boers' article on sharing in worship ("Thank You for Zebra Mussels, Asian Ladybugs and Sharing?" Feb. 21) and Alan Kreider's article in response ("Recovery of Witness," Nov. 7.) Both prompted me to think more in-depth about the practice of sharing times. While it is important to allow for sharing within the worship service, we need to consider what our purpose and intent is in what we decide to share with the congregation. When I recall sharing times that have been most meaningful to me, I remember people briefly sharing their faith stories prior to becoming members of the church—either prior to baptism or transferring their membership into the congregation. Hearing people's personal expressions of how they experience God's presence can be powerful.—*Jill Gerig, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Thank you for the focus in the Nov. 7 issue on sharing in the context of worship. Our congregation is learning our way in this public method of proclaiming God's grace and goodness. Some may find themselves uncomfortable at times with the personal nature of testimony, yet we are striving to grasp the difference between a personal faith and a private faith. We are learning our way through bragging on self and bragging on God.

Alan Kreider's article ("Recovery of Witness") and June Driedgers article ("Embodying God for One Another") help articulate some of my concerns and understandings of testimony in worship. As a pastor, I cherish my role as worship leader, messenger of the living Word and spiritual director to this group of disciples. I want to lead God's people in discovering the best ways to respond to his grace and movement in the world today—through trials and disappointments, amid joys and celebration, even alongside the horrors and evils that intrude on life. We often discover his grace in the reports of others. Others may see his movement as we reflect on our experiences with the Spirit. The words of Scripture inform and shape us in many ways, but in light of God's people testifying publicly, these words stand out: "For we are the temple of the living God, as God said, I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Corinthians 6:16). He is living among us and walking among us. Rejoice with us.—*Jeffrey D. Blackburn, Greensburg, Kan.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Our top news story (page 19) in this issue focuses on the relationship of Mennonite Church USA with another Christian denomination. In this case, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America leaders apologize for actions their forebears took against early Anabaptists. This is one of many moments throughout the past year when other Christians have reached out to Anabaptists and Mennonites. In response, Mennonite Church USA continues to consider participation in a new interchurch organization called Christian Churches Together; our first conversation partners are from the Pentecostal tradition. Mennonites and Anabaptists in Europe are responding to similar overtures. In our Nov. 7 issue we reported that "Swiss Plan Special 'Anabaptists Year,'" and several U.S. leaders—who are helping to promote the event that culminates on July 26-29, 2007—provide additional information in Readers Say letters on this page.—*Editor*

Year of the Anabaptists

Re "Swiss Plan Special 'Anabaptists Year,'" Nov. 7): What is happening next year in Switzerland is amazing. Having participated in the dedication of the Felix Manz (and other martyrs) marker dedication in 2004, I am delighted by the continuing efforts in Switzerland to acknowledge the Swiss Anabaptist movement and to build friendship connections to its heirs. Mennonite historian Hanspeter Jecker and others are making new discoveries to add to the list of significant sites. For anyone contemplating a tour to Switzerland this is good news.—*John Sharp, Hesston, Kan.*

Thanks for providing the informative, colorful and reader-friendly feature "Swiss Plan Special 'Anabaptist Year.'" I am pleased to be part of these upcoming events. This is a profound hour with many new exchanges between the Swiss Reformed and the Täufer. No matter if attendance is large or small, Täuferjahr '07 holds the potential for establishing many significant connections for years to come. I am amazed by the long list of events planned. By Christmas 2006, a 70- to 80-page program booklet and this Web site—www.anabaptism.org—will be released in three languages: English, German and French.—*Joanne Hess Siegrist, Bird-in-Hand, Pa.*

Responses to Elva Mast

After reading Elva Mast's letter to the editor ("Invest in Members, Not Buildings," Nov. 7), I wish to respond. First, I agree that *The Mennonite* should be in every Mennonite family's home, as I regard it a necessary ingredient in my spiritual diet; I would feel spiritually malnourished without it. At Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church, each family is automatically given a subscription to *The Mennonite* unless specifically requested otherwise. Each family is requested to submit payment for its subscription—in addition to regular offerings—but not demanded. We receive it through the mail. Perhaps Mast and others should ask their church leadership to consider getting *The Mennonite* this way as well.

We can be thankful for the editorial staff of *The Mennonite* for giving us this wonderful source of spiritual nourishment.—*Jim Conrad, Perkasie, Pa.*

I am responding to the letter from Elva Mast that appeared in the Nov. 7 Readers Say. I agree that a small investment in the church's membership can yield big dividends, but the reciprocal is also true: a church member or congregation's investment in the denomination's infrastructure yields much spiritual fruit.

I am glad Mast enjoyed the free issue of *The Mennonite*, but I encourage him to make the $41.95 investment to stay connected to Mennonite Church USA through its official publication. We need to view our denominational magazine and other Mennonite resources—such as those published by Mennonite Publishing Network—from the perspective of owners, not just customers. Someone who acts as an owner is loyal to the organization and doesn't shop somewhere else based on price.

If less than $1 per week is too much to pay to stay informed and you want to get your news for free, then *Our Faith* is available as "a grass-roots, every-home evangelical Mennonite/Anabaptist digest." If your congregation does not receive *Our Faith*, simply send an email request to ourfaithdigest@aol.com stating the number of copies needed and the delivery address, or mail your request to: Our Faith, P.O. Box 400, Harrisonburg, VA 22803.—*Steve Carpenter, regional associate editor for* Our Faith

Mennonite Church USA should challenge Bush
Thank you, Arthur Paul Boers, for your thoughts on the current administration and the theological claims of George W. Bush ("Dwelling Among Those Who Hate Peace," Oct. 3). I, too, have been concerned about George W. Bush's use of Christian language. It gives me chills when I hear him use his relationship with God as a selling point for his political choices. Bush does not seem to want to work with neighboring countries toward peace in a way that I believe the Bible calls us: to love our enemies and to not kill.

Using nonviolence would make our world a better place to live. I would like to hear our denomination, Mennonite Church USA, challenge and confront George W. Bush and his administration on his choices to use violence to bring about peace. The wars are tearing the world apart, and too many people are being killed.—*Ruth Kauffman, Portland, Ore.*

Praise forces out worship
I am the pastor of a small Mennonite church. We have about 25 members; when people ask me about the church, I inevitably find myself apologizing for the small size—this despite Jesus' assurance that "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there amongst them" (Matthew 18:20). But a recent experience caused me stop being so apologetic. I visited another Mennonite church and came away with a headache. Nothing against this church, but it was simply too big. Some of this was a matter of musical taste. I am used to traditional four-part singing, and this congregation had instrumentation and a lot of praise songs. But my discomfort went deeper. Yes, there was lots of praising God, but I never got the sense there was any worship. Praise had forced out worship. This happened, I think, because the group was simply too big.

The type of worship I am used to is intimate. Our group prays together, shares together and is quiet together. Can such worship exist when there are over 100 people at a service? I doubt it.
—*Mitchell Brown, Evanston, Ill.*

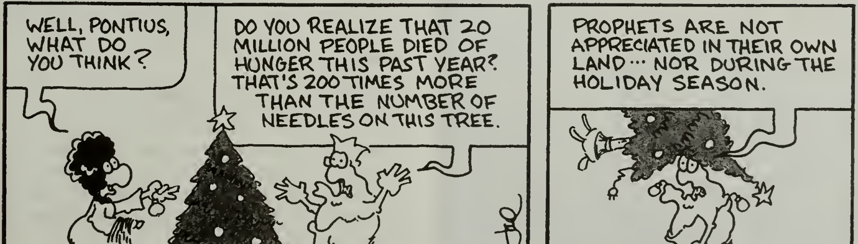
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Young adults in my congregation are: (41 votes)

- ○ More involved than in the past (34%)
- ○ Less involved (29%)
- ○ About the same (29%)
- ○ Not sure (7%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


WELL, PONTIUS, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
DO YOU REALIZE THAT 20 MILLION PEOPLE DIED OF HUNGER THIS PAST YEAR? THAT'S 200 TIMES MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF NEEDLES ON THIS TREE.
PROPHETS ARE NOT APPRECIATED IN THEIR OWN LAND… NOR DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

IN BRIEF

MMA's Regier receives SRI Service Award

Mennonite Mutual Aid staff member Mark Regier, was honored Oct. 30 with one of the highest awards in the socially responsible investing field. As MMA's stewardship investing services manager, he was presented the SRI Service Award at the SRI in the Rockies conference in Colorado Springs, Colo. Dedicated to holistic Christian stewardship, MMA has significantly broadened its stewardship investing activities as a result of Regier's efforts, including shareholder advocacy and community development investing. Regier has also led MMA to engage and promote efforts in the broader faith-based and secular socially responsible investing communities.—*MMA*

Goshen falls in NAIA soccer tournament

Goshen (Ind.) College's men's soccer team lost 3-1 in penalty kicks to Park University in the first round of the 2006 NAIA National Championships Nov. 15 in Daytona Beach, Fla. Goshen (15-5-4) had qualified for the national tournament for the first time since 1977 by defeating Cornerstone University 4-2 on penalty kicks in the regional championship on Nov. 11. —*Goshen College*

Marian Franz, Peace Tax Fund director, dies

Marian Franz

WASHINGTON—Marian Hilda Claassen Franz, the first full-time director of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF), died Nov. 17 after a two-year struggle with cancer. She was 76.

Franz was born Oct. 12, 1930, in Newton, Kan., to Ernest G. Claassen and Justine Wiebe Claassen of Whitewater, Kan.

In 1954, she graduated from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. She married Delton Franz in 1954 and after brief pastorates in Kansas moved to the south side of Chicago to attend Mennonite Biblical Seminary, where she earned a master's degree in religious education. In Chicago, the Franzes began an inter-racial Mennonite congregation. They were active in the Civil Rights Movement and coordinated rallies and speeches with Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1968, the Franzes opened the Washington Office of Mennonite Central Committee. In 1971, she helped found Dunamis, a Christian organization that spoke to policymakers about issues facing the nation. She became its first director.

In 1982, Franz became director of NCPTF. She called upon members of Congress to create legislation to allow those conscientiously opposed to war to pay all of their tax obligations without having their money used to fund military force.

She was a founder of the Faith and Politics Institute, a nonpartisan, interfaith organization founded in 1991 to help public officials stay in touch with their faith as they shape public policy.

She was also a founder of Conscience and Peace Tax International, which works through international movements and institutions to obtain recognition of conscientious objection to paying for armaments and war.

Franz was a member of the Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church, where her memorial service will be held Feb. 17, 2007.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Delton, and siblings Vernon and Doris Claassen. She is survived by her three children, Gregory Franz of Los Angeles, Gayle Franz of Newton, Kan., and Coretta Franz-Eby of Lancaster, Pa., and by a son-in-law, Rich Eby, and two grandchildren Justine and Adam Franz-Eby, all of Lancaster, Pa.—*J. Daryl Byler*

LaShinda Clark

Ugandan teens fight HIV through drama, poetry

Eve Munwemoko, a student at Bugabula Secondary School in eastern Uganda, recites a poem about AIDS. With support from Mennonite Central Committee, a Ugandan organization, AIDS Education Group for Youth (AEGY) is training hundreds of young people to serve as "peer educators" at high schools in the rural Kamuli District in eastern Uganda.—*MCC*

JEC recommends 2008 Canada-U.S. gathering

WINNIPEG—The Joint Executive Committee (JEC), which consists of executive committees of the Mennonite Church Canada General Board and the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board, met Oct. 29-30 in Winnipeg and recommended a North American summit jointly authorized and sponsored by Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA on the basic theme of living faithfully as a contrast community in a global reality.

The gathering is tentatively scheduled for July 2-3, 2008, immediately prior to the Mennonite Church Canada annual assembly, likely in Winnipeg. Mennonite Church Canada will take the lead in planning this event, inviting input broadly in Canada and the United States.

The Mennonites in Mozambique sent a request to adapt the Mennonite Church USA and Canada logo as their own. JEC refused a similar request from the Swiss Mennonite Church in 2002. JEC members noted that other countries have incorporated the logo without asking permission (e.g. Thailand, Colombia and Macau) and that it has been life-giving to the national churches involved. The logo has been registered in Canada and the United States, and JEC will continue to monitor its use in these two countries.—*Joint Executive Committee*

CEE celebrates 25 years, changes name

HARRISONBURG, Va.—China Educational Exchange's 25-year anniversary and its name change to Mennonite Partners in China marks the program's broadening work in China. MPC commemorated the anniversary with a program in Chengdu in October.

Aaron Linscheid

hel's car co-op eco-friendly, builds community

beth Lang, left, and Miriam Friesen, students at Bethel ege, North Newton, Kan., use the college's car co-op. ent Senate vice president Friesen, a junior from Paoli, has been instrumental in getting the program on its feet he second year. Twelve students, including Friesen, have nteered as drivers for the 2006-07 school year. Students contact any of these drivers between 8 a.m. and 11:59 to request a ride. Requests for local rides can be made on spot, but requests for rides to Wichita or Hutchinson ire 24-hour advance notice. Drivers have the right to ine any request.—*Bethel College*

While no major program changes are planned, the name change intends to more clearly identify MPC as a Mennonite program to the North American constituency. "Since our work has moved beyond educational exchange to include church partnerships and social assistance, we felt that our name should not be as narrowly defined," says Myrrl Byler, director of MPC.

MPC's social services include a student sponsorship program, rehabilitation for deaf and handicapped children and a counseling center, as well as a church-based drug rehabilitation program.

MPC, a program of four Mennonite church agencies—Mennonite Central Committee, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network—serves mostly in the Sichuan Province.

Byler says, "About 25 percent of our teachers have enjoyed China so much that they stayed for three or more years." Also, he says, almost 150 English teachers and foreign affairs officials, most of them from the Sichuan Province, have spent at least one semester at a Mennonite college.

Lawrence Burkholder, president of Goshen (Ind.) College, signed an agreement with the Sichuan Provincial Bureau of Education for an undergraduate exchange in 1979. This was the first undergraduate exchange since the reopening of China between a college in the United States and a Chinese educational institution.

MPC formed in 1981 to meet a request for an enlarged exchange and more teachers and administer the program.—*Anna Groff*

Israeli settlers attack Palestinian village

AT-TAWANI, West Bank—At 8:45 a.m. on Nov. 19, 50 adult male Israeli settlers—some carrying guns—walked from an Israeli outpost toward the small Palestinian village of Tuba. On the way, they encountered the young children from Tuba and Migaer Al-Abeed walking to school in At-Tuwani under Israeli military escort. Terrified, most of the children ran back toward Tuba.

Two international volunteers from Operation Dove ran from At-Tuwani to Tuba. When they got near the village, they met some of the villagers who had fled their houses and taken refuge in the hills, along with flocks of sheep and goats. A villager said the settlers had thrown stones at the villagers' animals and generators. They also emptied storage containers of water, a commodity in short supply in the village.

At 9:45 a.m., the Israeli police and army arrived on the scene, more than an hour after they had been called. The police and soldiers ordered the Doves to stop following the settlers.

The Doves videotaped their discussion with the police. Audible on the recording are the police officers' radio conversations with their colleagues, who said they encountered some of the settlers, including four the villagers described. However, the police did not detain the settlers, claiming they had no evidence against them.

This assault is only the latest example of settler violence toward Palestinians in this area that has evoked no response from Israeli authorities.—*CPT*

MDS, Presbyterians work at relief in New York

CONKLIN, N.Y.—Mennonite Disaster Service and Presbyterian Disaster Service are working together in New York after severe flooding in June. PDS is helping secure funding and doing the casework, while MDS is working on how and when to start working on the many devastated homes.

Almost all mobile and trailer homes in the area have been destroyed, and there are virtually no rentals available. Single-family homes that had seemed secure on their foundations floated downriver. Reports say that as many as 1,000 homes were destroyed in this area of New York, sometimes called the Southern Tier region, and as many as 3,500 homes were damaged. Some 500 homes in Conklin alone were damaged.—*MDS*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

School numbers

Percentage of 16,000 U.S. elementary schools surveyed that have eliminated recess or may do so: 40. Approximate percentage by which clinical obesity in children ages 6-19 has increased in the past 30 years: 200. Percentage of Americans who agree that arts are vital to providing children a well-rounded education: 93. Percentage of Americans who agree that arts education improves children's attitudes toward school: 86. Number of U.S. states that implemented budget cuts to arts funding in 2003: 42.—*Yes!*

Prayer partners

After Hillary Clinton was elected to the Senate in 2000, she showed up one day at a Senate prayer group that usually drew conservative figures like Sam Brownback of Kansas and rick Santorum of Pennsylvania. The speaker that day was Brownback himself, who had planned to talk about how a recent scare with cancer had deepened his faith. Upon seeing Clinton, he changed his subject. He talked about how he had previously hated her and said derogatory things about her. "Mrs. Clinton, will you forgive me?" he said. She said she would and expressed appreciation for his apology. The two unlikely partners subsequently worked together on legislation, including a bill to protect refugees fleeing sexual abuse.—*Atlantic Monthly,* quoted in *The Christian Century*

A lesson in stealing and sharing

There was once a Christian woman who lived a quiet life teaching high school business classes in a nice middle-class school in a small Midwestern town. Each day she prayed faithfully that God would use her for his glory. One day as she prayed she felt a nagging sense that God had something else in store for her life. A short time later, a friend who was a missionary teacher in Honduras felt God's leading to contact her and see if she would come to Honduras to teach. Before she knew it, she was living in Honduras, teaching high school business and English in a Christian school.

She quickly grew to love her new job and her new home—the blue skies, warm weather, the friendly and gracious Honduran people. But one thing bothered her—stealing seemed to be so commonplace here. Most of the stores and many of the homes in town had armed guards. The school had been broken into many times and had its supplies stolen.

Dreamstime.com

a Honduras parable

by Cathy Chapman

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She couldn't even hang her laundry on the clothes line unless someone was watching it because people would scale the fence and steal the clothes. It bothered her that the very people that she came to help would steal from her.

It bothered her that the very people that she came to help would steal from her.

One day during her class, she remembered that she needed to get something from the office. She gave her students an assignment to keep them busy, walked down the hall to the office, took care of her errand and returned to her classroom. She sat down at her desk and was about to start grading papers while the students finished their assignment. But where was her pen? She had left it on top of the pile of papers. She looked on top of her desk, thinking it might have rolled away. But the pen was nowhere to be found. Then she realized one of her students had stolen it.

She was furious. This was the last straw. The pen was a going away gift from a friend at her school in the United States. How dare one of her students steal her pen.

She stood up, hands on her hips, and glared at her class.

"All right," she said in Spanish. "Who took my pen? It was right here on my desk when I left, and it isn't here now. I want to know who took it."

No one said a word. This made her even angrier.

She decided she was going to get to the bottom of this. She put on her sternest "teacher face" and went to the first student. She had learned from past experience that a child who was lying could not look her directly in the eye.

"Did you take my pen?" she asked, looking directly into the face of the child.

"No," said the student, looking her in the eye. "I don't have your pen."

One by one, she asked each student the same question. One by one, each student looked her in the eye and denied taking her pen.

Now she was both angry and perplexed. One of them was looking her straight in the eye and lying.

"All right," she said. "No one is leaving this room until you write an essay. I want you to tell me what you believe stealing is and why you don't think taking my pen is stealing."

All heads went down and the students began to write. One by one, they completed their assignment, handed it to the teacher and left the classroom for the day.

The teacher read what the students had written. They expressed it in different ways but each student said essentially the same thing: The person who took the teacher's pen wasn't stealing because he didn't have a pen, and the teacher had lots of other pens.

Now I ask you, Who sinned? The student who took the pen or the teacher who had other pens?

The impact of what the students had written slowly sank in—the person who took her pen did not have a pen, and she had many other pens.

The teacher laid her head on the desk and cried as she prayed, "Dear Lord, forgive me for causing one of these children to sin. Help me remember that I am yours and everything I have is yours—including my pens. Lord, help me be sensitive to the needs of those around me. Help me share what I have so that others will not be tempted to steal from me."

The teacher was not the same from this day forward. She observed the needs of those around her.

The teacher was not the same from this day forward. She observed the needs of those around her.

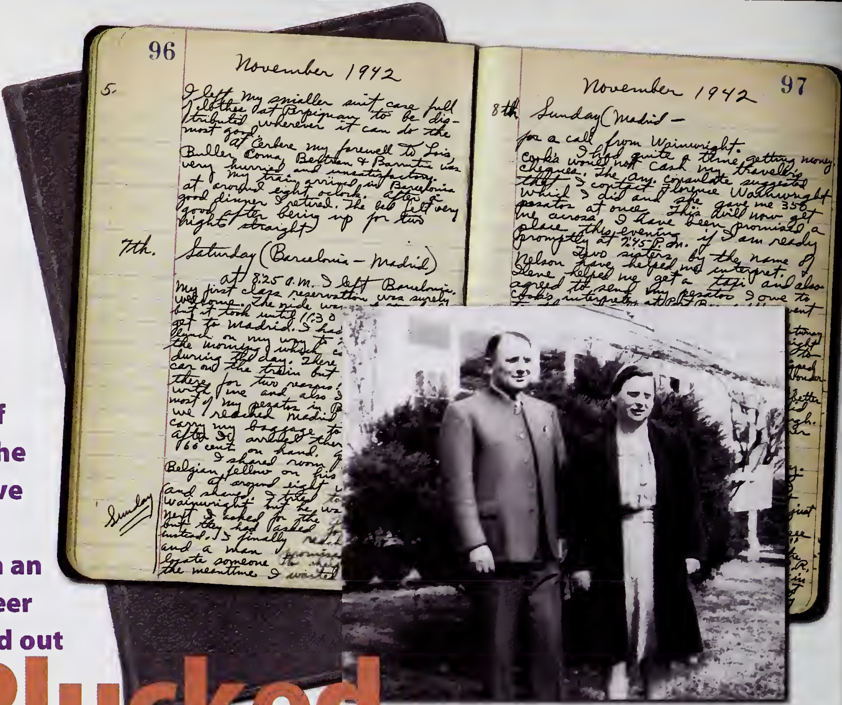
"Do you need a pen? Here, take mine, I have another."

"You look cold. Here, put on my sweater."

"Did you forget your lunch? Here, share mine."

The more generous she became, the less people stole from her. They knew that all they had to do was ask and she would gladly share all that God had given her.

Cathy Chapman goes to Honduras every year with the MAMA Project, a Mennonite organization based in Pennsburg, Pa.



96

November 1942

5. I left my smaller suit case full
of clothes at Perpignan to be dis-
tributed wherever it can do the
most good.
At Cerbere my farewell to Lois,
Buller, Coma, Beltran & Barrutia was
very hurried and unsatisfactory.
My train arrived in Barcelonia
at around eight oclock. After a
good dinner I retired. The bed felt very
good after being up for two
nights straight.

7th. Saturday (Barcelonia – Madrid)
At 8:25 A.M. I left Barcelonia.
My first class reservation was surely
welcome. The ride was
but it took until 11:30
get to Madrid. I had
lunch on my way to
the morning which c
during the day. There
car on the train but
there for two reasons:
with me and also I
most of my pesatos in B
we reached Madrid
carry my baggage to
after I arrived there
66 cents on hand.
I shared room
Belgian fellow on his
At around eight
and shaved I tried to
Wainwright but he wa
next I asked for the
but they had asked
instead. I finally
and a man
locate someone
the meantime I waited

Sunday

November 1942 97

8th Sunday (Madrid –
for a call from Wainwright.
I had quite a time getting money.
Cook's would not cash my travelling
cheques. The Am. consulate suggested
that I contact Florence Wainwright
which I did and she gave me 350
pesatos at once. This will now get
me across. I have been promised a
place this evening if I am ready
promptly at 7:45 P.M.
Two sisters by the name of
Nelson have helped me interpret.
Ilene helped me get a taxi and also
agreed to send my pesatos I owe to
Cook's interpreter at Port Bou

Joseph N. and Edna (Miller) Byler, c.1946-50, while serving with Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa. Journal entries in Joe's handwriting, November 1942.

Joseph N. and Edna (Miller) Byler Collection, MC USA Archives

At the turn of the century, he could not have dreamed or planned such an effective career as God carved out for him.

Plucked from the fields

by Bonnie Byler Scheid

The story of Joseph N. Byler

Thou wilt make known to me the path of life.—Psalm 16:11
Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.—Psalm 119:105

Joseph N. Byler was plucked from the fields at an early age, and marked for God's service, just as God plucked David, Moses and Abraham for a job much larger than their expectations. The Lord, in the heat of misfortune, refined his faith, producing one as sturdy and precious as gold. This is a memorial to his work as director of relief for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), from 1946 to 1962.

Byler, known as J.N., was one of seven children born to Lydia (Gingerich) and Noah Byler in an Amish home on a farm somewhere between Cleveland and the western border of Pennsylvania. While education beyond eighth grade was not allowed, he found a way despite a thick forest of obstacles by following God's leading—one trusting step at a time. At the turn of the century, he could not have dreamed or planned such an effective career as God carved out for him.

While chopping wood one day, Noah was killed by a falling tree, leaving Lydia to raise Valentine, John, Mattie and Joseph. Valentine, the oldest, was only in his teens, and John died as a child.

In 1905, Lydia married a widower, J.J. Miller, who already had eight children. To this union were born three more babies: Melvin, Lester and Mae. At this time, Valentine left the family home, and Joe followed a few years later in his teens, each seeking to support himself when they were hardly more than boys.

Joe wound up driving truck in Iowa, where he met and married a Mennonite girl. Tragedy struck early when a train crash killed the young bride on their honeymoon. Devastated, Joe found his way to Hesston (Kan.) College, founded just a few years earlier in 1909. The college became the first vehicle for his education. He completed his high school equivalency in the Academy section, then went on to study in the Junior College.

He developed his insatiable desire to learn more of history, sociology and geography. College opened his eyes to a new world of learning and a larger world he had not seen before.

He pursued more college courses at the University of Nebraska, where he earned a master's degree and completed the studies (but not the dissertation) for his doctorate. Sixty years later, his grandson John contacted the university and secured a copy of Joe's 1925 master's thesis, "Migrations Due to Nonresistant Principles with Especial Reference to the Mennonites."

Joe seized the opportunity to teach at Hesston, where he met and married Edna Miller of rural Zimmerdale, Kan.

They weathered the Depression, though it meant giving up the home they had just bought, to stay in a college-provided cottage. When salaries came up short at the end of the year, they packed up their cooking gear and woodworking tools to spend the summer in Colorado Springs, Colo. Joe found work as a carpenter, and Edna canned fresh corn and peaches. The children, Donna Lou and Delmar, played along the streams, making pop from Kool-aid and spring water. Their summer break provided a new look at other lifestyles before returning to teach again in the fall.

Along came World War II, and people in France needed clothing and food for the winter. Men and women across the country were helping in the war effort as their consciences allowed, but the question of how became acute for Mennonites. Some worked in hospitals or on road crews. MCC called up Joe, a devout Mennonite, to head up a relief effort in Europe, leaving Edna to serve as MCC hostess in Akron, Pa. She served as surrogate mother to many young conscientious objectors preparing for alternate service.

The positive and critical result of these relief projects and alternative service was that all 26 branches of Mennonites shared in the relief effort of MCC.

Joe and Edna sent Donna Lou and Delmar to board as students at Hesston Academy. This was already home to them, with aunts and uncles nearby.

At the end of the war, Joe became director of relief for MCC in Akron. He found himself useful on start-up committees such as Oxfam, a British relief organization, and the Heifer Project, which sent young heifers and horses to Europe by boat to replace those lost during the war. Joe was also instrumental in the development of Church World Service projects and provided counsel to the newly formed Catholic Relief Services.

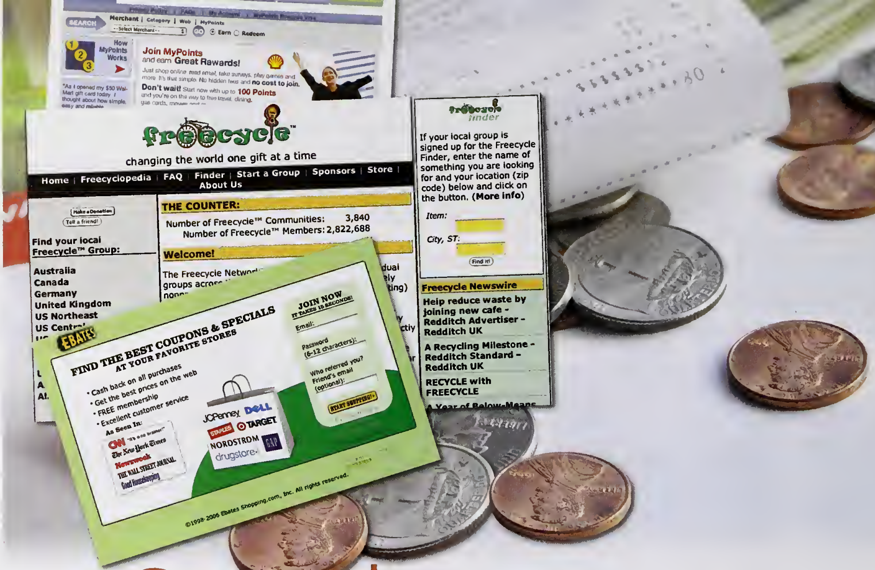
Personal goals are fine, but Joe found through the tragedies and joys of his life that it is more important to have one's will attuned to the will of God for guidance.

He and Edna traveled to Hong Kong in 1951, living in an orphanage, to open up Mennonite relief services for the Chinese refugees flooding into that colony to escape religious persecution in mainland China. From there they flew to the Middle East to begin an aid program to Palestinians. Edna provided a sales outlet in the United States for self-help projects from both regions.

Returning to the United States, Edna became known as the Self-Help Lady as she drove to and from Mennonite communities, displaying embroidery work from India, Palestine, Puerto Rico and Hong Kong. These proceeds, plus money from quilt sales across the country, were funneled to MCC for aid around the world. This was the beginning of Ten Thousand Villages as we know it today, with outlets in major U.S. cities.

Joe Byler could not have planned or dreamed up goals such as God accomplished through him. Personal goals are fine, but Joe found through the tragedies and joys of his life that it is more important to have one's will attuned to the will of God for guidance. He learned unmistakably that God's ways are higher than our ways.

Bonnie Byler-Scheid is a daughter-in-law of J.N. and Edna Byler. She and Bob, her husband, attend St. James Presbyterian Church in Littleton, Colo.



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Simple ways to live on less

by Susan Miller

Try these at home.

Here are some simple ways to live more simply. There are many more.

- As for the world of electronics: We don't have cable TV, nor do we have a satellite dish or digital TV. However, we consider high-speed Internet access a certain need.
- We have a home phone plan that's trimmed down without all the "special features," such as caller ID. Consider prepaid phone cards for long distance calling. Price around and compare before you pay for long distance from your local carrier. Consider also the telephone Internet options, such as www.vonage.com. For moderate usage with Vonage, the cost is a mere $14.99 per month. Hooking this up yourself can rate a little on the irritating side, though.
- OK, I know this is radical: At this time in our lives we also consider a cell phone unnecessary. We have weighed the emergency factor and came out deciding that if we're mostly at home we don't need a "mobile" phone. Once, though, it did come in handy as we were hit from behind by a motorist and needed to call the police. The driver who hit us was on his phone. If you desire a telephone for peace of mind, consider a prepaid cell phone you can delegate only for emergency use.

If you've moved past the fear of using your credit card and personal data online you may find considerable savings in cyberspace, both in time and money. Here are my tried-and-true favorites that I continue to use:

- **www.mypoints.com** When registering at this site, and with each visit to sites that are emailed to you on a regular basis you will receive points. Even if you never actually buy anything, you still accumulate points. For example, every couple months I earn enough points to redeem for a $5 gift card for somewhere rather upscale like Starbucks, Panera Bread or Barnes & Noble. These come in handy for gift giving.

The best deal for buying and earning points is printer ink via mypoints.com. You get great deals and at least 350 points for each purchase. Shopper caution: This is only a great deal if it's an item that you were going to buy anyway.

If you've moved past the fear of using your credit card and personal data online you may find considerable savings in cyberspace, both in time and money.

- **www.ebates.com** This cool site sends a quarterly check whenever your balance is over $5. Every time I shop online I search here first, and most often the retailer I am using is listed. You must go through this portal to obtain the "ebate" and what they call a "tracking ticket," and you can keep track of all purchases and your ebate balance as you go.
- **www.upromise.com** If you register your loyalty cards, not credit cards but rather those with the key chain thingy, such as those for Jewel/Albertson's, Dominick's/ Safeway or CVS, you will be credited in your account for the items you purchase that are marked with a Upromise symbol. This money is saved for college for your kids.
- **www.freecycle.org** This is an awesome grassroots concept built on the truth that one man's trash is another man's treasure. The group stands behind the promise of keeping stuff out of the landfill by "posting" it on a local freecycle board. The interested party then emails you, and you make arrangements for pickup. Items we have either posted or received number in the hundreds: desk chairs, tap and ballet shoes, pea gravel, a VCR, men's shirts, perennial plants, cordless phone and a bike trailer. Freecyclers typically show up as soon as possible, in keeping with the spirit of the movement and the common goal of eagerly transplanting trash appropriately. Each group has a moderator. As I'm writing this, the number of Freecycle communities totals 3,311.
- **www.ebay.com** (a first place to go, for buying and selling) If it's not available for free, as in freecycle.com above, then you may want to check the price on ebay.com. To those for whom waiting out an auction is not worth the time, consider some sellers' "Buy It Now" option. We've successfully sold an old G.I. Joe doll, maternity clothing in lots, furniture (for local pickup) and most any eclectic item that someone else is looking for that we happen to have just sitting there.
- **www.amazon.com** (again, for buying and selling) Amazon.com has, bar none, the best prices on used books. Unlike ebay, Amazon charges nothing for "listing" your book. They only take a small commission when and if you sell. They also give you a shipping credit. Amazon handles the payments from your customers and puts them directly into the account you specify. You are, however, required to ship your sold book within two business days.
- **www.info.com** This is the search engine I use for finding sites listing "coupon codes" to apply as you checkout with your online store. I have successfully "doubled-up" deals by using not only ebates.com as a portal to a purchase but I have also added a coupon code for an additional discount with my purchase.
- **www.turbotax.com** You can purchase your own tax calculation software and install it on your computer, as we've done in the past. This enables you to help others with their taxes, too. But we've found that if you are simply doing your own taxes, using this Web site is a streamlined, economical and handy way to get things done fast.
- **Groceries** We spend more on food than we do on our mortgage. Therefore, creative ways to save are a necessity. We recommend two main things to keep your grocery totals in line: (1) shop with a list, and (2) leave your impulses (and probably your children, too) at home. It sounds cruel; it really helps. But if you do take your children to the store, be firm. Let them know, after the answer is no, that buying a particular item is not the best use of your money. Saying that you don't have the money can cause fear and uncertainty.

Taking into account the economy of time and gas, the allure of shopping at many different stores has lost its appeal to us and has little or no measurable savings. Shopping mostly in one place, the local chain grocery store, also helps us limit the amount of impulse purchases overall. Using the self-checkout for a few items keeps us from waiting in line.

Taking into account the economy of time and gas, the allure of shopping at many different stores has lost its appeal to us and has little or no measurable savings.

Buying items in quantity from a warehouse-type store has not been a savings for us either. We have discovered the most savings from buying just what we need, when we need it.

- **Clothing** In a tight budget, unfortunately, there is not a great deal of money left over for clothing. We have found high-priced, sought-after clothing (Abercrombie, Levi's) at thrift shops and through freecycle.org.
- **Banking, credit cards, loans** This is a potentially huge area for helping and/or hurting your bottom line. If you use these services wisely it can mean savings of money and the more valuable commodity, time.

We bank (almost) totally online. We never wait in lines. We opt to receive checks via direct deposit. If we have a paper check we drive through an ATM machine at a time when it's not busy. With the free online banking option we are able to move money between accounts 24/7, pay

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Community programs are a part of our children's lives, but we don't overdo it.

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bills online, track automatic payment withdrawals and monitor our credit card usage to be alerted to the first sign of credit card theft.

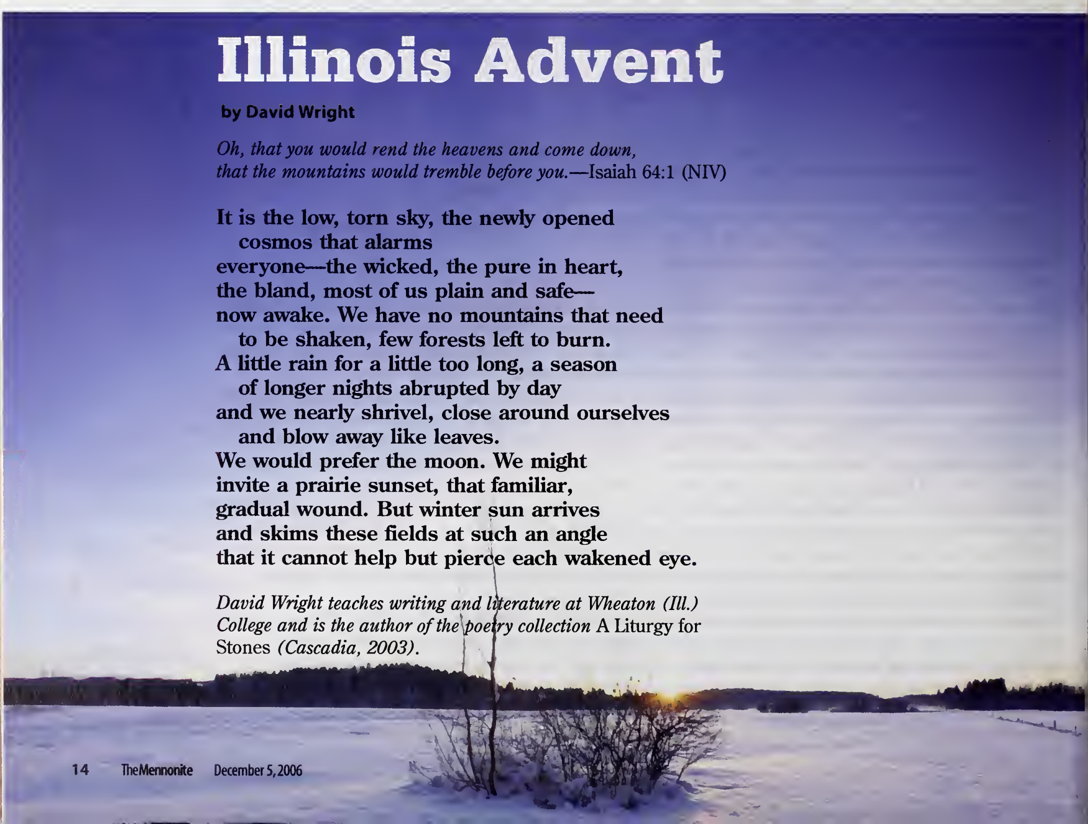
Place your recurring bills, whenever possible, on automatic payment from your checking account. If the vendor is so willing, place them on credit card automatic charge. Our credit card currently pays us a 1 percent rebate the month following its usage. So we use our credit card each month to pay for gasoline purchases, Internet service and telephone.

• **Life insurance** The most painful one to ponder is the one to get over with first. Buy enough term life insurance to get your children grown and/or you or your spouse to retirement age. Our plan includes enough to pay off our current home and a few years' salary. And we bought 20-year plans so the premium will stay the same for the entire 20 years. The best deal is to shop where providers compete for your business at a site such as www.insweb.com.

• **Auto insurance, once your car no longer has payments and is fully yours, can include only liability insurance.** For us the initial savings made us really glad to have the car paid off. Also, comparing rates is no waste of time. Savings for an apples-to-apples switch of policy from one major company to another saved us $300 per year. And the new provider also covers our homeowners insurance policy for less, too.

• **Community programs are a part of our children's lives, but we don't overdo it.** We try to select activities that cannot be duplicated at home, synchronized swimming, for example. As a result, they (and their parents) are able to enjoy the challenge and rewards of the team-building experience. These activities are important but not at the core of their lives or self-worth. Their family, especially their dad, supplies that need for them.

Susan Miller lives in Bartlett, Ill., and attends Harvest Bible Chapel.



Illinois Advent

by David Wright

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you.—Isaiah 64:1 (NIV)

It is the low, torn sky, the newly opened cosmos that alarms
everyone—the wicked, the pure in heart,
the bland, most of us plain and safe—
now awake. We have no mountains that need to be shaken, few forests left to burn.
A little rain for a little too long, a season of longer nights abrupted by day
and we nearly shrivel, close around ourselves and blow away like leaves.
We would prefer the moon. We might
invite a prairie sunset, that familiar,
gradual wound. But winter sun arrives
and skims these fields at such an angle
that it cannot help but pierce each wakened eye.

David Wright teaches writing and literature at Wheaton (Ill.) College and is the author of the poetry collection A Liturgy for Stones *(Cascadia, 2003).*

We are not the only society that has grappled with prolife and prochoice issues.

Is human life less valued today?

by Ruth Thiessen

To God all human life is sacred.

We live in a society that seems increasingly to value self, health and technology. With these values come abortions and the development of technologies allowing us to assist in the creation of babies in a petri dish. Fertilizing more eggs than are needed for in vitro fertilization, we now use these embryos for scientific research to find cures for diseases that once seemed impossible to treat effectively. We face an increasing number of ethical dilemmas. Are we going to embrace all of today's values or take a stand against practices and experimentation that devalue human life?

To answer some of these troubling situations, we should acknowledge God as the Creator of all life (Genesis 1). After creating the physical world, God created the animal kingdom and then humankind. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27 (NIV). Humankind is unique in that we can have a relationship with our Creator. We are given a free will.

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The early church, having witnessed Jesus' love for all humanity, took a strong prolife position, refusing to practice infanticide or perform abortions.

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Equally amazing is our physical design. At the moment of conception, the 23 chromosomes and approximately 50,000 genes from each parent combine to determine all our physical characteristics—sex, facial features, body type, color of hair, eyes and skin. Even our intelligence and personality are determined within our genetic code. At the one-cell stage, we are already essentially and uniquely the person God designed us to be. Knowing this, shouldn't we value all human life?

We are not the only society that has grappled with prolife and prochoice issues. Societies throughout history practiced abortion and infanticide. But the Israelites, God's chosen race, had respect for God's involvement in their lives from the moment of their conception. Psalm 139:13-16 (NIV) says: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made … your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

At the time of Christ, abortion and infanticide were commonly practiced among the Romans. Although Jesus never directly addressed these practices, he demonstrated how much he valued life in how he treated people. He healed those who were lame, blind, had leprosy, plus many others. He made no distinction between people who were disabled, sick, aged, healthy or productive. He valued them all.

The early church, having witnessed Jesus' love for all humanity, took a strong prolife position, refusing to practice infanticide or perform abortions. Do we have the same conviction today? Or do we sometimes try to justify abortion on the basis that having the baby will be too hard for the teen parents, too economically stressful and destroy too many future opportunities? Or do we willfully ignore our convictions because to acknowledge them would mean we needed to become personally involved and provide practical long-term help for teens and young women we encouraged to choose life for their baby?

Few of us could have envisioned that the Roe vs. Wade court case in 1973 would have such a dramatic effect on the sanctity of life. At first the concern focused on a few women who were so desperate to end their pregnancies that they were willing to risk back-alley abortions. Now, 33 years later, we are aborting 26 million unborn babies per year globally.

When first legalized, there were stringent regulations as to who could procure an abortion. Today the mere inconvenience of having a baby will suffice. To further desensitize both the mother and public at large, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the unborn child is not a person for constitutional purposes. This opened the door to treating fetuses with grave disrespect.

In the 1970s, abortions were restricted to the first trimester. Today a woman can choose one up until the time of the baby's birth. From these liberties, it has progressed to the use of RU-486, a pill that can be taken in the earliest stage of a suspected pregnancy. This allows a woman to dispose of the fetus in the privacy of her own home.

Although the methods of abortion may vary, depending on a woman's stage of pregnancy, no one can deny that it results in the death of a precious unborn baby. Despite society's attempts to portray abortion as an easy, painless way to end an unplanned pregnancy, from my experience as the director of a pregnancy crisis center for eight years, this often was not the reality. Instead I witnessed tears of regret and anger regarding the deceptive portrayal of abortion by prochoice groups. No semantic gymnastics used to lessen the value of a woman's baby could convince her that she had simply aborted a fetus or heal the ache of her empty arms.

Another consequence of legalizing abortion has been fewer babies available for adoption. To compensate, reproductive technologies have gained importance. Today in vitro fertilization is used to provide hope to many childless couples.

When this method was first introduced, usually three eggs were retrieved, fertilized and implanted. Due to the expense and time factor involved in this procedure, medications were developed to enable the harvesting of up to 12 eggs. Technicians will probably fertilize them all and usually implant three embryos. The rest are frozen. Some embryos might be used for subsequent pregnancies, but the rest may either be disposed of or used for research. If we truly believe that life begins at conception, is it ethically right to treat surplus embryos in this way?

Therefore, should Christians use the modern technology of in vitro fertilization? Yes. It can be done ethically. Only allow as many eggs to be fertilized as you are willing to have implanted.

Today an increasing number of the surplus embryos are used in stem cell research. At one week old, their undifferentiated cells and prolific quality are believed to be the best source for developing treatments for diabetes, multiple sclerosis, leukemia or immune disorders. But do we have the right to kill these week-old unborn embryos so that we can enjoy better health? Are these the only source of stem cells that can be used in combating the effects of these diseases?

David Prentice, a professor of bioscience and researcher in the field of adult stem cells says, "In several studies it has been shown that adult stem cells from tissues such as bone marrow or the brain can form virtually any body tissue. The most noted example is that of multipotent adult progenitor cells (MAPC cells) from bone marrow—what some have called the "ultimate stem cell"—which can grow forever in culture and make all body tissue" (*Human Dignity in the Biotech Century*, InterVarsity Press, 2004). Adult stem cells have been used in successfully reducing the effects of some of our most feared diseases. One major advantage to using adult stem cells is that if they are taken from the patient being treated there is no threat of immune rejection.

The acceptance of abortion and the use of in vitro fertilization also have opened the door to a new eugenics movement. We have judged the Germans harshly for labeling the Jews and other "undesirables" as nonpersons, making it permissible to gas them or even use them for medical experimentation to improve the health and well-being of others. But are we that much better? Fertilizing eggs in a Petri dish has allowed us to do genetic diagnoses before implanting them in the mother's womb. If genetic weaknesses are found, the embryos often are disposed of. The Nash family is a case in point. Their daughter was born with Fanconi anemia, a disease leading to bone marrow failure. Finding a suitable donor to help her seemed remote. So they had 30 eggs fertilized, of which 25 were considered unsuitable and therefore disposed of. This left five that were disease free and used for implantation. But is it right to create life, only to dispose of it if it is genetically predisposed to certain diseases?

Amniocentesis is yet another example of a good medical practice that can be used for selfish and destructive causes. It was first used to determine if an unborn child had a disease that could be corrected in the womb or if treatment would be required right after delivery and to determine the age of the fetus. Today it is often used to determine abnormalities and used for sex selection—with the less-than-perfect child possibly aborted.

According to a 1993 March of Dimes survey, more and more people are buying into the idea that unless their baby is nearly perfect it is better to abort them. Eleven percent of parents surveyed said they would abort their baby if it was predisposed to obesity. Eighty percent would do so if a disability was detected. Forty-three percent would use genetic engineering to enhance their child's appearance.

Peter Singer, professor at Princeton (N.J.) University, took it a step further. Conception in the petri dish or amniocentesis are not the only options available to parents who wish to dispose of imperfect children. He believes "infanticide is perfectly permissible within a person's first two years of life. … It makes all the difference, in his view, whether a baby is normal or whether a baby is deformed or suffers from Down syndrome, autism or some other abnormality, however slight" (*Human Dignity*). Unfortunately a growing number of parents, who desire disease-free children, are seeing infanticide as more attractive.

Cloning is yet another reproductive technology that raises ethical questions. Dr. Nigel M. De S. Cameron says, "There is a double connection between abortion and cloning. Cloning advocates fall into two groups: those who favor the birth of live-born children and those who may or may not favor cloned children but who seek cloned human embryos for purposes of experimentation" (*Human Dignity*). Again the life of one human being is destroyed to improve the well-being of another.

The circumstances of conception or an embryo or baby's mental or physical state should not be the determining factor in whether they are worthy of life.

To God all human life is sacred. The circumstances of conception or an embryo or baby's mental or physical state should not be the determining factor in whether they are worthy of life. Neither should all modern technology be held in suspicion. Great advancements are being made in finding cures for some of our most feared diseases. But when it devalues human life or destroys it to achieve these goals, we need to express our opposition to such experimentation and practices. To remain silent only facilitates our society's trend to keep enlarging the categories of those unworthy of life.

Ruth Thiessen lives in Airdrie, Alta.

End the silence about addiction

Ronald J. Hunsicker is president and CEO of the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers in Lancaster, Pa.

We have gone to great lengths to address the health of our denomination, conferences and congregations. And we have paid particular attention to "health conditions" that do not always receive recognition. These have included depression and bipolar disorders as well as dealing with individuals with a wide range of "special needs." We even introduced a discussion at the last denominational gathering on the need to provide health-care coverage to all citizens of this country. Mennonites have had a significant concern and involvement in issues related to health.

Nevertheless, there seems to be silence when it comes to dealing with what most health-care experts suggest is either the number one or two health-care issue facing this country: addiction. Government figures for 2004 suggest that approximately 23.48 million Americans aged 12 and above meet the criteria to be diagnosed as afflicted with the disease of addiction. That is nearly 10 percent of the U.S. population. Yet of that number, only 2.33 million received treatment during the last year for which statistics are available. We have a disease that impacts 10 percent of our population, yet only 9.9 percent of those needing treatment received it. For what other disease would we tolerate such numbers? For what other disease would Mennonite Church USA and its official publication be silent? Gathered information suggests that two of the major barriers keeping people from seeking and accessing treatment are health insurance barriers to providing coverage and the stigma still associated with this diagnosis.

Perhaps we believe addiction does not affect "our people" or is not a disease. There is no evidence to support either of these beliefs. Addiction does not discriminate against any denominational group, economic class or racial group. And much evidence supports the understanding that it is a chronic disease from which there is no cure but for which there is treatment, and this disease can then be managed for the lifetime of the individual who has it. This is the same approach we take for people diagnosed with diabetes and hypertension. Why are we so silent on this disease?

People who have a history of addiction in their family are more predisposed to have it. Left untreated, it causes premature death. It is not how much one drinks or how many pills one takes but the way they drink and take pills. They drink and take pills because they cannot not drink and cannot not take pills. If that does not make sense, then spend some time with a recovering alcoholic. This is not about choice but a brain disease. The brains of addicted individuals are categorically different from the brains of nonaddicted individuals.

Here are some initial steps we can take:

1. We should encourage all of our institutions of higher learning to have regular 12-step meetings on their campus. These meetings should serve both the student population and the surrounding community. An increasing number of young people are receiving treatment and in recovery and are looking for 12-step recovery-friendly campuses to continue their education. By hosting such meetings on campus we are not only offering a mission consistent with our history but increasing the overall health of the community.

2. We should make available 12-step meetings at all denominational gatherings.

3. We should encourage all our seminaries to offer courses on addiction for people being trained to become pastors, including identification of the disease and an understanding of the need for treatment as well as lifelong management issues associated with this disease.

4. We should encourage all our congregations to have an annual educational event on the disease of addiction, the treatment available and the policies needed to increase the number of people accessing addiction treatment.

5. We should encourage all Mennonite Church USA pastors to attend one open 12-step meeting per year. It is hard to understand the issue if we do not "hang out" with people who have the disease.

These are modest steps for Mennonite Church USA to move from silence to informed participation in addressing this disease that impacts so many friends, neighbors, and sisters and brothers in the faith. With our Anabaptist theology of community, we have much to offer those who are recovering and so much to learn from those whose life has been shaped by a sense of openness, trust in a higher power and commitment to helping others find what they have.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Love came down at Christmas**—Marlene Kropf

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Lutherans repudiate condemnations

But Augsburg Confession cannot be changed; infant baptisms still an issue

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) took an action Nov. 11-13 in Chicago rejecting past statements attributed to early Lutheran church reformers and expressed "its deep and abiding sorrow and regret for the persecution and suffering visited upon the Anabaptists during the religious disputes of the past."

The Church Council is the ELCA's board of directors and serves as the legislative authority of the church between churchwide assemblies. Assemblies are held every other year; the next is Aug. 6-11, 2007, in Chicago.

The council acted because past statements have become problematic for the ELCA's current relationships with Mennonite Church USA and other Christians who trace their heritage to the 16th-century Anabaptist reformers, according to the council's background materials.

In the action, the council declared that the ELCA "repudiates the use of governmental authorities to punish individuals or groups with whom it disagrees theologically." It rejected the arguments of Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon, two 16th-century church reformers, "in which they hold that governmental authorities should punish Anabaptists for their teaching," the action said.

Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, calls the action "an encouraging sign of healing of old relationships [that] opens doors of new understanding and mutuality between our historic Christian traditions."

The council's action repudiated similar statements in the Formula of Concord and declared that condemnations in the Augsburg Confession directed at the Anabaptists do not apply to today's Mennonite Church USA.

Finally, the council said condemnations in the Augsburg Confession related to Anabaptist baptismal faith and practice and participation in the police power of the state "are properly the subject of future conversation between our churches."

Mennonite Church USA and the ELCA began conversations in 2002. The first meeting was scheduled to begin Sept. 13, 2001, but because of terrorist attacks it was not convened until Feb. 21-24, 2002, at Goshen (Ind.) College, with subsequent meetings Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 2002, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Feb. 28-March 2, 2003, at Sarasota, Fla., Oct. 16-19, 2003, at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and March 18-21, 2004, at Valparaiso (Ind.) University.

The liaison committee included four Lutherans and the following four Mennonites: Tom Finger, Jim Juhnke, Gayle L. Gerber Koontz and John D. Roth. Finger and Koontz are theologians, Roth and Juhnke are historians. Finger points out that this was the first church-to-church dialogue in which Mennonite Church USA has participated.

Juhnke said Nov. 27 that the two main issues the committee faced from the beginning were the condemnation of Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession and the question of allowing Lutherans in Mennonite congregations to have their infants baptized. However, the Confession cannot be changed, and Mennonite polity does not allow the denomination to dictate what congregations do.

This latest statement shows a "disparity of results," Juhnke said. The Lutherans have taken an action of conciliation, but "where have we moved?"

Andre Gingerich Stoner, director of Interchurch Relations for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, welcomes "this important step in the relations of our churches, which is born out of nearly two decades of prayers and conversations. We are thankful for the initiative of ELCA leaders during these years in pursuing conversation and relationship."

We are thankful for the initiative of ELCA leaders over nearly two decades in pursuing conversation and relationship. —Andre Gingerich Stoner

Randall R. Lee, executive, ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs, in an interview with the ELCA News Service, said: "The purpose of the declaration is, first, to apologize for the persecution of the Anabaptists who are the forebears of the Mennonite Church in the USA and around the world, and also to acknowledge that the situation of the 16th century no longer applies in the 21st century."

Lee explained that the importance of the declaration now is that it will provide a foundation for international conversations between the Lutheran World Federation and the global Mennonite community. "Our action will provide energy to that conversation in the hopes of furthering our work together," he said.

Stoner says the ELCA declaration "facilitates further fruitful conversation on matters where we have ongoing differences of understanding and practice. We strongly support the international dialogue between the Mennonite World Conference and the Lutheran World Federation on the significance of the Augsburg Confession and related issues."—*Gordon Houser with ELCA News Service*

More water leaks in Elkhart, Ind., offices

Mission Network, Executive Leadership may need to find temporary offices.

Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership are examining the possibility of temporarily relocating the Elkhart, Ind., offices after the 21st water leak incident in the last year disrupted work for several days.

Representatives of Elkhart Housing Partnership, which owns and runs the Cornerstone Building housing the Mennonite Church USA offices in Elkhart, discovered a burst pipe on the third floor of the building on Sunday morning, Nov. 5. The pipe, located in an area of the office that is home to Mennonite Mission Network's International Ministries and U.S. Ministries departments, had been leaking for some time and more than an inch of water was standing in some places on the third floor.

> [We are] commissioning an environmental study of the offices to determine if the ongoing water and debris problems constitute a health risk to employees.—Ryan Miller

The water also caused similar puddles and damage to Mission Network offices on the building's second floor, scattering ceiling tile debris and causing water damage to desks, some electronic equipment and many paper products, including supplies and print materials—both active and archived. The Cornerstone Building's Plate Room also suffered considerable damage.

The Nov. 5 flood was the 10th burst or leaking pipe to cause relocation of offices, equipment or files or significant damage in the last four months. Other water incidents in the last year have caused inconvenience, but not significant damage.

Many staff members worked from lounges, homes or coffee shops to escape the odor, moisture and dust in the air during clean-up efforts. Dozens of industrial-sized fans and dehumidifiers ran around the clock from Sunday morning through Wednesday afternoon as the areas dried. Several staff members who tried to work in the affected areas experienced respiratory congestion or headaches. Some staff members shared tables or desks; some went home for health reasons.

Though many pieces of computer equipment suffered moisture damage and several were soaked, none of the equipment suffered irreparable damage.

Ryan Miller

Ann Jacobs of Mennonite Mission Network and Natasha Martinez of Elkhart (Ind.) Housing Partnership survey flood damage at the Mennonite offices after a pipe burst Nov. 5.

The two agencies in recent months agreed to move forward on a capital campaign to build new offices adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus (see box). If the campaign is successful, the agencies could inhabit that building by 2010.

A group of representatives from Executive Leadership and Mission Network have been monitoring the situation. Working with Elkhart Housing Partnership, the group is commissioning an environmental study of the offices to determine if the ongoing water and debris problems constitute a health risk to employees.

This group is also researching potential sites for relocating the offices if it becomes impossible to work in the current facility before the new facility is completed.—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

New building for Mennonite Church USA offices in Elkhart, Ind.

Mennonite Mission Network received approval on Sept. 22 from Mennonite Church USA Executive Board to launch a $9.8 million campaign to build a new facility in Elkhart, Ind. The office building will be located adjacent to the campus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and will house Mission Network staff, Executive Leadership and staff members for other denominational agencies. The fund-raising campaign is currently in its "quiet phase" as Mission Network solicits cash and pledges from 10 to 15 donors (see "Elkhart, Ind., Building Project Approved," Oct. 3).

Giving to education agency increases

Colleges, universities, seminaries operated in the black in last fiscal year.

Mennonite Education Agency and the colleges, universities and seminaries it oversees all ended their operating budgets in the black on June 30. Their total financial activity combined for nearly $122 million in revenue—operating and nonoperating—and nearly $103 million in operating and nonoperating expenses (see box). This aggregate represents the largest institutional enterprise within Mennonite Church USA.

According to its auditors' report, MEA also experienced an upturn in support from across Mennonite Church USA.

"Our finances seem to have stabilized," says MEA's executive director Carlos Romero. "Church giving has remained constant at approximately 30 percent of the budget. ... Our fiscal year that just ended showed an increase of $9,729."

Income for MEA operations during the last fiscal year totaled $793,971, and expenses totaled $790,535. That difference helped increase MEA's unrestricted net assets to $78,604.

MEA sponsors a committee that manages the pool of investments from 22 different entities; they include most Mennonite Church USA institutions of higher education as well as some area conference and congregational education funds.

"As of June 30," says MEA associate director Lisa Heinz, "the market value of the investment pool was $144,526,437."

In addition to its oversight of institutions of higher education, MEA also works with the Mennonite Schools Council—a group formed out of the former Mennonite Elementary Education Council and the former Mennonite Secondary Education Council. According to Romero, giving to MEA from the Mennonite Schools Council increased over the last two years while overall giving from higher education institutions declined during the same period.

In addition to ending their years in the black, MEA and the colleges, universities and seminaries reported unqualified (clean) audits to their respective boards of directors.

MEA also manages the Racial/Ethnic Leadership Education fund that supports the pastoral leadership programs of the denomination's racial/ethnic leadership groups—such as African-American Mennonite Association and Hispanic Mennonite Church. The RELE fund saw a 13.5 percent increase in income from the previous year. However, the $118,004 in revenue was well below the $220,500 given to the program during the fiscal year ending in June 2003. That reduction in income and programming was the result of Mennonite Church USA's separation from Mennonite Church Canada, says Romero.

"Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada had a strong history of financial support for RELE," says Romero. "The same was true for the Northwest Conference. ... The significant decline in contributions led us in 2004-2005 to reduce the [RELE] budget by $115,000."—*Everett J. Thomas*

Our finances seem to have stabilized. Church giving has remained constant.
—Carlos Romero

Mennonite Church USA Higher Education
Colleges, Universities, Seminaries and Mennonite Education Agency
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2006

Institution	Total Revenue/Gains	Total Expenses
Bethel College	$11,429,823	$11,908,535
Bluffton University	25,421,979	21,329,259
Eastern Mennonite University	31,827,257	27,626,466
Goshen College	35,243,002	26,934,952
Hesston College	10,025,173	9,989,451
Associated Menn. Biblical Seminary*	6,976,251	4,211,940
Mennonite Education Agency**	976,410	968,160
Totals	121,899,895	102,968,763

*AMBS is a program of both Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA
**MEA activities include more than oversight of higher educaiton institutions

Source: audited financial statements

'Mortal enemies' find peace with visits

Most Korean Christians reject peace theology because of Japanese occupation.

Anabaptist leaders from Korea and Japan are working to heal a wound caused by Japan's occupation of the Korean peninsula from 1910–1945.

Many Koreans consider the Japanese mortal enemies, say members of a Japanese Mennonite delegation that last spring called on Jesus Village Church, an Anabaptist faith community in Chun Chon, South Korea. A six-member delegation from Jesus Village Church returned the visit Oct. 20-23 and were hosted by the Japanese.

Kyong-Jung Kim, director of the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul, which is supported by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness, helped host the Japanese during their visit to Korea last spring.

"It is my confession that we have not tried hard enough to develop our relationship further with Japanese churches" Kim said. "So I was thankful to rediscover that we were actually doing something meaningful together for God's kingdom, and it was the body of Christ that we were working through."

Kaz and Lois Enomoto, who serve in Tokyo through Mennonite Mission Network, say that the visit was a continued attempt "to share God's love and grace of forgiveness and reconciliation. We seek to experience in ourselves through this exchange program the power of Jesus' cross that broke down the dividing wall of hostility resulting from the Japanese occupation of Korea over 60 years ago."

Il-Young Koh

Brother Nham of Jesus Village Church in Korea presents an object lesson based on treasure in clay jars at Honancho Church in Tokyo.

In Tokyo, the Koreans visited sites, museums and places of cultural interest that define the Japanese context and gave the Koreans insight into their neighbor's history. They also met with a Brethren in Christ and a Mennonite congregation as part of their tour.

Kim spoke at Yayoidai Brethren in Christ Church and Sanguk Nham of Jesus Village Church preached at Honancho Church; both emphasized commonality in Christ and the importance of fellowship and partnership in Asia.

"If churches try to make peace in relationships like this, especially in conflict areas, the world may want to learn from us how to bring peace instead of mocking us for not doing anything for good," said Kim.

The Korean believers presented a Jesus Village Church banner to the Honancho church. The banner reads, "Where there is a sharing of love, God is present."

"We believe that God has been present with us as we enjoyed the fellowship this last week," the Enomotos said. "We hope that the first step that we took will continue to expand and bear fruit for the glory of God's kingdom."—*Dan Dyck of Mennonite Church Canada with Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

South Korean Anabaptists condemn North Korea's nuclear testing

Staff of the Korea Anabaptist Center recently signed, with 19 other organizations in the Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict, a letter condemning North Korea's nuclear testing. The statement also calls for the United States to immediately engage in bilateral talks with North Korea.

Mainline South Korean churches, however, tend to respond quite differently. Since 1953, North and South Korea have lived in the tension of a cease-fire—not a peace agreement—signed between the North Koreans and the United States. In part due to this tension, peace theology is not a popular perspective or topic of discussion for mainline organized churches in South Korea, said Tim Froese, executive director for international ministries of Mennonite Church Canada Witness and one of the founders of the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul.

Rather than offering a Christian alternative to war, Froese said Korean leaders invoke Old Testament wars and the just war theory to justify the need for national defense.

The Korea Anabaptist Center, which celebrated its fifth anniversary Nov. 4, is working with churches to help them "understand themselves with a peace identity," says Cheryl Woelk, who coordinates education programs at KAC and serves as head teacher at its English teaching ministry, Connexus, through Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

Woelk and Jae-Young Lee, KAC peace program director, say there is something everyone can do: Pray for the situation. In particular, they ask for prayers that "both governments and citizens refrain from responding in a sharp, reactionary way to the nuclear testing issue, that both governments and people learn more about the complexity of the issue from different perspectives before reacting in ways that increase the threat of violence and division among people, and ask that people not dehumanize the 'enemy.'"—*Mennonite Mission Network*

AIDS/HIV epidemic spreads in Ukraine

Mennonite Central Committee's program offered to students in grades 8-11.

When Natalia Starastenkova completes her 12-hour shift as a security guard she does not go home to rest. Five mornings a week, Starastenkova goes to public schools in Zaporozhye to teach a healthy living educational program designed to stop the rapid escalation of HIV infections in the country, especially among youth who are at a higher risk of exposure.

Launched five years ago in Kiev, the program is now also offered in 10 regions in Ukraine for students in grades 8 to 11. The program was introduced last year in Zaporozhye, where it is taught in 11 of the 110 public schools.

"I'm convinced it should start in grade one," says Starastenkova, emphasizing that education is the key to supporting those living with HIV, stopping the transmission of the disease and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Through a series of 36 lessons, trained volunteers teach a program approved by the government for use in public schools. This is one of several programs supported by Mennonite Central Committee in Ukraine related to AIDS. In 2006, the MCC Generations at Risk program has provided grants of $11,000 to support HIV prevention programs in Ukraine.

The rapid spread of HIV is one of the most pressing social, economic and political issues facing Ukraine today. In the early 1990s, shortly after Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union, the World Health Organization estimated about 1,500 in Ukraine were infected with HIV. Today the rate is nearly 400,000 or 1 percent of the adult population.

Two grade 11 students, Eliena and Anton, say the program helps them understand the influence of the public media, the power of peer pressure and the consequences of the decisions they make.

"A person is created to live, not to die from AIDS," says Eliena. "These lessons challenge us to think if it pays to taste all these things that life offers young people. Young people have to think of the consequences of the choices we make."

They say youth are influenced by television programs, music, advertisements and billboards that promote sexual activities.

"Everyone is shouting the message of sex—free sex, to taste life while you are young," says Anton. "If the government doesn't put limitations on the public media, it will be difficult for young people to make good choices."

The lessons also help youth understand that it is important to choose friends who have shared values.

"Everybody needs a strong opinion about major issues," says Eliena, emphasizing she has decided to make healthy life choices as a means to protect herself from getting HIV.

"You can choose your own group of people who can support you in these situations," she says.

Heterosexual transmissions now account for a growing number of HIV infections, says Irina Manakova, a trained volunteer working with Starastenkova in Zaporozhye. The program encourages frank discussions about long-term benefits of sexual health and addresses misconceptions that the disease is primarily associated with commercial sex, injections by drug users and men who have sex with men.

Lessons that focus on relationships, friendships and peer pressure set the foundation for discussions on HIV, the importance of young people being accountable for the decisions they make and the consequences of these decisions, explains Manakova.—*Gladys Terichow of Mennonite Central Committee*

Everyone is shouting the message of sex—free sex, to taste life while you are young. —Anton

Photos by Melissa Engel

Far left: Irina, a mother of three sons diagnosed with AIDS, supports a program that provides a holistic response to HIV. Anton (center) and Eliena (right), both 16, say an HIV prevention program supported by Mennonite Central Committee helps them understand the risk of HIV infection.

Amish victims' fund passes $3.2 million

Four of five injured girls have returned home; one remains hospitalized.

When they receive commendations for extending "miraculous forgiveness," the Amish say that they simply try to forgive as Jesus did and that all honor must be given to God. —Herman Bontrager

The Nickel Mines (Pa.) Accountability Committee meets regularly to review and approve disbursement of funds for medical bills, counseling, transportation, lost wages and other expenses resulting from the shooting of 10 girls—five fatally—at the West Nickel Mines Amish School on Oct. 2. Costs are expected to be significant even though hospitals and many other medical service providers have not billed the families for their initial services.

Four of the five injured girls have returned to their homes. Two of the girls suffered serious head wounds. One of them remains hospitalized, receiving rehabilitation, and hopes to be released by Christmas. A church representative reported that she has shown remarkable improvement. The other, semicomatose at home, miraculously survived, according to observers, but is likely to have lifelong disabilities. One is back in school full-time and is expected to recover fully from shoulder, hand and leg injuries. The other two are in school as much as their rehabilitation treatments permit and are recovering from lung, abdominal, facial and leg injuries that will require extensive reconstructive surgeries.

Some of the families expect to incur expenses for the long-term medical services, reconstructive surgery and rehabilitation their daughters will need. The accountability committee will ensure that funds are reserved for those future expenses. It is not known at present what future services will be billed.

The West Nickel Mines Amish School building was razed about 10 days after the tragedy occurred, and the property was reincorporated into the pasture land from which it had been taken. The school committee has selected a site for construction of a new school in the coming months. Offers to donate funds and materials to rebuild the school have exceeded what will be required.

Family and community members say the prayers of those who supported the families have contributed to the recovery several of the girls have experienced. They are grateful for the prayers, thousands of messages of condolence and the many gifts sent to the families and community. Volunteers from the community have worked hundreds of hours to sort the mail and deliver the gifts. Financial contributions exceed $3.2 million.

Arrangements have also been made to pay medical bills directly with the funds Capital Blue Cross set aside for that purpose. The accountability committee is in contact with the coordinator of the Roberts family fund to make sure adequate support is available for Roberts and her children.

While bearing their own deep pain and grief, the families of the victims personally extended forgiveness to the Roberts family. The Amish community is aware that because of that act of forgiveness many people around the world are talking about forgiveness and peaceful alternatives to violence. When they receive commendations for extending "miraculous forgiveness," the Amish say that they simply try to forgive as Jesus did and that all honor must be given to God.

The Accountability Committee has established guidelines for use of the funds: medical expenses; counseling services for students and their families, teachers, emergency response providers and other community members affected by the event; transportation for victims and for family members attending to the victims; rehabilitation and reconstructive treatment; long-term disability care; modifications to homes or schools if needed to make facilities handicap accessible; construction of a new school building and any other expenses resulting from the event. If adequate funds are received, contributions may be made to charity funds of health-service providers and to volunteer public service entities that responded to the event without charging for their services.—*Herman Bontrager of Nickel Mines Accountability Committee*

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RESOURCES

Blessed Are the Pacifists: The Beatitudes and Just War Theory by Thomas Trzyna (Herald Press, 2006, $11.99) takes a fresh look at pacifism as a way of life and a practical method of conflict resolution that is grounded in Scripture, particularly the Beatitudes from Matthew's Gospel.

Sing the Journey 2 by Kenneth Nafziger and the Journey Musicians (Herald Press, 2006, $15.99) is the second CD of hymns from *Sing the Journey*. Featured are guest soloist Marilyn Houser Hamm, Shekinah (an independent female singing group) and Sons of the Day (a group of young men who explore a cappella traditions). Among the 19 hymns are "Loving Spirit," "Hamba nathi/Come, walk with us," "Longing for Light," "Cuando el pobre/When the poor ones," "God remembers pain" and "Alleluia, the Great Storm is over."

Consider Jesus: Daily Reflections on the Book of Hebrews by Donald R. Jacobs (Herald Press, 2006, $15.99) emphasizes that each change of need or circumstance in our lives is a new opportunity for Jesus to reveal himself in all his available fullness.

Cups Held Out by Judith L. Roth, illustrated by Brooke Rothshank (Herald Press, 2006, $12.99), is a children's book about a little girl traveling with her father to a Mexican village who encounters folks so poor they are reduced to begging. She discovers what's "plenty enough."

Hungry Souls, Holy Companions: Mentoring a New Generation of Christians by Patricia Hendricks (Morehouse Publishing, 2006, $15.95) is based on extensive interviews with youth and youth ministers and offers practical guidance for youth and campus ministers, spiritual directors, Christian educators, pastors and parents.

The Genesis of It All by Luci Shaw, illustrated by Huai-Kuang Miao and Mary Lane (Paraclete Press, 2006, $17.95), presents the Genesis creation narrative for children in fresh and contemporary language that sparks the imagination as God creates, first in black and white, then bursting in color.

Wisdom in the Telling: Finding Inspiration and Grace in Traditional Folktales by Lorraine Hartin-Gelardi (SkyLight Paths, 2006, $19.99) is a collection of stories retold that reveal the universal experience of the human heart, reminding us we are not alone. The stories come from many cultures and faith traditions.

The Gospel According to the Beatles by Steve Turner (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, $19.95) looks in depth at the development of the group's philosophy and at how it affected their lives, their music and their audience. Turner defines what the Beatles were about and distills the message of love, peace, freedom and transcendence that was at the heart of their gospel.

Doing God's Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Marketplace by R. Paul Stevens (Eerdmans, 2006, $14) tells how readers can find lasting and satisfying meaning for marketplace involvement in the light of the Christian faith and tradition.

The Poetry of Yorifumi Yaguchi: A Japanese Voice in English, edited by Wilbur J. Birky (Good Books, 2006, $9.95), collects 150 poems by a nationally known poet in Japan who is a Mennonite pastor and poetry professor.

Requiem for Peace: An International Call for Forgiveness and Reconciliation by Larry Nickel (Mennonite Central Committee Supportive Care Services, 2006, $22) is a CD that presents a message of hope. It is available at www.mccscs.com/store or by phone at 800-622-5455.

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WORKERS

Barker, Nate, was ordained as associate pastor of youth and families at First Mennonite Church of New Breman, Lowville, N.Y., on Oct. 29.

Blosser, Janet, was ordained as associate pastor for children and families at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on Nov. 19.

Fretz, Stephen, was ordained as pastor at Cedar Grove Mennonite Church, Greencastle, Pa., on Aug. 20.

Gerber, Shawn M., was ordained as associate pastor of outreach/pastoral care at First Mennonite Church of Denver, Denver, Colo., on Nov. 5.

Jarrett, Beth, was licensed as associate pastor at Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Sept. 24.

Jarrett, Harry, was installed as lead pastor at Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Sept. 24.

Klingensmith, David Jr., was ordained as associate pastor at Sandy Hill Community Church, Coatsville, Pa., on Nov. 5.

Landis, Ken R., was ordained as pastor at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y., on Oct. 29.

Lindsay, Daniel, was licensed as a pastoral team member at Birch Grove Mennonite Church, Port Allegany, Pa., on Nov. 5.

Ramer, Steve M., was licensed as pastor at Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship, Fort Collins, Colo., on Oct. 29.

VanGorder, Eugene, was licensed as a pastoral team member at Birch Grove Mennonite Church, Port Allegany, Pa., on Nov. 5.

Woodard, Irving, was licensed as a pastoral team member at Birch Grove Mennonite Church, Port Allegany, Pa., on Nov. 5.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Beidler-Shenk, Ezra Lucas, Oct. 24, to Ken Beidler and Elaine Shenk, Iowa City, Iowa.

Buckwalter, Luke Everett, June 19, to Joseph and Sera Whitmore Buckwalter, Anchorage, Alaska.

Byler, Isaac David, received for adoption on March 31 by Jason and Janine Byler, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Cavanaugh, Morgan Mackenzie, Oct. 11, to Stephen and Monica Detweiler Cavanaugh, Sarasota, Fla.

Derstine, Stellar Christian, Nov. 6, to Zachariah and Kara Souder Derstine, Telford, Pa.

Forry, Nathaniel Rudy, Oct. 20, to Steve and Colleen Forry, York, Pa.

Fox, Rachel Joy, Oct. 12, to Kevin and Melodee Fox, Waterloo, Ontario.

Hunsberger, Ellie Sarah, Sept. 14, to Nicholas and Elizabeth Pile Hunsberger, Windber, Pa.

Jutzi, Noah Thomas, Nov. 2, to Loren and Jennifer Jutzi, Philadelphia.

Lacher, Nathan William, Nov. 3, to Chad and Jennifer Goshow Lacher, Souderton, Pa.

Magill, Ava Kathrine, Oct. 25, to Ryan and Audrey Gaeddert Magill, Denver, Colo.

Mast, Caia Ann, Oct. 7, to Nevin and Christina Smith Mast, Chesapeake, Va.

Miller, Emily Grace, Sept. 25, to Eric and Angela Vandenburg Miller, Elkhart, Ind.

Moser, Peter Millard, Sept. 21, to David and Ingrid Friesen Moser, Goshen, Ind.

Newcomer, Kinsey Marie, Oct. 24, Kevin and Shelly Richmond Newcomer, Wakarusa, Ind.

Nyce, Colson Wade, Nov. 8, to Christopher and Diane Refsnider Nyce, Telford, Pa.

Schloneger, Lillian Brielle, Nov. 14, to Matthew and Rebecca Rossman Schloneger, Newton, Kan.

Schmucker, Luke Drew Gunden, Nov. 2, to Scott Schmucker and Lisa Gunden, The Woodlands, Texas.

Schneider, Kade David, Oct. 25, to David and Leah Hirschey Schneider, Croghan, N.Y.

Mitschelen, Joseph Talen, Aug. 29, to Bill and Keri Witmer Mitschelen, Nappanee, Ind.

Yoder, Grace Adelyn, Nov. 8, to Jason and Sharon Miller Yoder, Telford, Pa.

Young, Evan William, Nov. 2, to David and Stacey Goering Young, Wichita, Kan.

MARRIAGES

Aeschliman/Smith: Olivia Aeschliman , Archbold, Ohio, and Jeremy Smith, Archbold, Sept. 9 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Bower/Weaver: Kelly Bower, Telford, Pa., and Matthew Weaver, Telford, Nov. 4 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Froese/Wenger: Ben Froese, La Junta, Colo., and Brianne Wenger, Orrville, Ohio, Aug. 5 at the bride's parents' home, Orrville.

Fuller/Swartzentruber: Ben Fuller, Indianapolis, and Joni Swartzentruber, Apple Creek, Ohio, Aug. 12 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Voth/Wedel: Jerry Voth, Goessel, Kan., and Janice Wedel, Hesston, Kan., Oct. 28 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

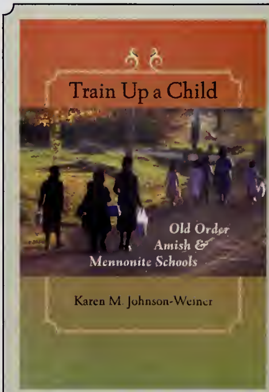
DEATHS

Biege, Rita Grim Bauman, 83, Boyertown, Pa., died Oct. 23. Spouse: Paul H. Bauman (deceased). Spouse: David S. Biege. Parents: Paul A. and Erma Grim. Child: Paul Bauman; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Boyertown Mennonite Church.

Clark, Hester Parker, 70, Millersburg, Ind., died Nov. 3 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Hubert Clark. Parents: Sampson and Nora Kelly Parker. Children: Elizabeth "Kay" Clark, Treva Miller, Patti Clark, Shirlee Clark, Dianna "Lynn" Griffith, Mike H., Michael B.; 15 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 7 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Groff, E. Pearl Denlinger, 93, Leola, Pa., died Nov. 5. Spouse: D. Lester Groff (deceased). Parents: J. Funk and Ella Denlinger. Children: Lester, Kenneth, Lois Landis, Joyce Zook, Velma Sauder; 12 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11 at Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa.

Grothhaus-Falk, Marie Schoen, 98, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Nov. 11. Spouse: Henry P. Falk (deceased). Parents: Peter and Marie Hackbarth Schoen. Child: Henry; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 16 at Good Samaritan Village, Mountain Lake.



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Karen M. Johnson-Weiner

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Hochstetler, Dean L., 78, Nappanee, Ind., died Oct. 30. Spouse: Edna Swartzentruber Hochstetler (deceased). Parents: William and Mary Maust Hochstetler. Children: Clair, Verle, Lee; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Horst, David, 94, St. Jacobs, Ontario, died Nov. 7. Spouse: Elva Snider Horst (deceased). Parents: Menno and Lovina Bauman Horst. Children: Marlene Good, Linda Frey, Jeanette Seiling; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Houdeshell, Esther Mae Ressler, 78, Denver, Colo., died Nov. 10. Spouse: Raymond Eugene Houdeshell. Parents: John and Ella Ressler. Children: Thad, Tina; two grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 15 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

Kauffman, Daniel Erb, 84, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 7 of complications from Alzheimer's disease. Spouse: Edith Yoder Kauffman (deceased). Spouse: Anna Martin Kauffman (deceased). Parents: James and Mabel Erb Kauffman. Children: Daniel, Deborah Miller, Sally Green, James; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kroeker, Henry Dean, 62, Inola, Okla., died Nov. 9. Spouse: Bonnie Jean (Bird) Kroeker. Parents: Frank and Elizabeth Rempel Kroeker. Children: Karl F., Karenza E. Kroeker. Funeral: Nov. 11 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola.

Leinbach, Etril J., 96, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 14. Spouse: Wilma Pearl Pletcher Leinbach. Parents: Leander Garber and L. Anna Leinbach. Children: Keith, Dale; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Northern, Mary Lou, 71, Elkhart, Ind., died Nov. 5. Parents: Roy and Edna Johnson Fuller. Funeral: Nov. 9 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Pauls, John A., 94, Inman, Kan., died Nov. 16. Spouse: Hilda Pauls. Parents: Henry J. and Sara Doerksen Pauls. Children: Allen, Jane Rich, Mary Woiczenchowski; seven grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 21 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Ream, David E., 52, Lima, Ohio, died Nov. 4 of a heart attack. Spouse: Lynette Hartman Ream. Parents: Leonard Jr. and Helen R. Ream. Children: Matthew, Katie Ream. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Pike Mennonite Church, Elida, Ohio.

Roth, Donald, 73, Wayland, Iowa, died Oct. 21. Spouse: Karen Anne Lyons Roth. Parents: Lloyd Ira and Lulu Elizabeth Freyenberger Roth. Children: J.D. Beghtol, Jim Beghtol, Cinnamon Krabill, Tasha Boecker; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 25 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Short, Kenneth E., 87, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 3. Spouse: Ada Short. Parents: Aaron and Verna Yost Short. Children: Marvin, Wendell, Janice Short, Lois Loree, Sandra Stuckey; 12 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Stalter, Edwin "Jack," 84, Flanagan, Ill., died Oct. 5 of kidney failure. Spouse: Marcella Rocke Stalter. Parents: Edward and Lena Roszhart Stalter. Children: Anita Stalter, Deanna Moshier, Philip, Timothy; 10 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 8 at Prairieview Mennonite Church, Flanagan, Ill.

Stoltzfus, Frances L. Shetler, 84, Parkesburg, Pa., died Oct. 27 from injuries sustained in an auto accident. Spouse: Ralph G. Stoltzfus (deceased). Parents: William and Lydis Kauffman Shetler. Children: Jean I. Groff, Audrey K. McClune, Sharon L. Hostetter, foster daughter, Alice G. Parker; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Thiessen, Dan H., 89, Inman, Kan., died Nov. 8. Spouse: Dora Abrahams Thiessen. Parents: Dietrich and Agnes Friesen Thiessen. Children: Lois Penner, Vera Williams; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Toews, Grace Linda, 92, North Newton, Kan., died Nov. 17. Parents: Henry and Agnes Flaming Toews. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Voth, Orlando W., 90, Goessel, Kan., died Oct. 13. Spouse: Virginia Casey Voth. Parents: Peter J. and Susie Schmidt Voth. Children: Janice Winter, Robert Blackmore, Linda Schill, Wesley, Galen, Brian; 25 grandchildren; 35 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 18 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Wampler, Mark William, 93, LaSalle, Colo., died Sept. 29. Spouse: Naomi Minnich Wampler. Parents: Lewis and Grace Cox Wampler. Children: Glenn, David, Virginia Crawford, Kenneth; 15 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 4 at Greeley Mennonite Church, Greeley, Colo.

Wyse, Bernice M. Wyse, 88, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 16. Spouse: Maynard Wyse (deceased). Parents: Fred and Mina Graber Wyse. Children: Leland, Douglas, Linda Smucker; two grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052.

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Seeking ***elementary school principal*** for Winter 2007 and beyond. **Chicago Mennonite Learning Center**, a small, Christian urban school K-8. Commitment to the vision of providing quality Christian education with peace and conflict resolution emphasis in the ethnic and economic diversity of the city. Responsibilities include general administration, budget management, educational supervision, supervision of overall maintenance. Administrator supervises staff of 15, coordinates volunteer services and reports to board of directors. Desirable qualifications: teaching and administrative experience, master's degree in education or related field and active membership in Mennonite or other peace church. Send letter of application and current resumé to Sueann VonGunten. CMLC Chairperson, 54078 Eastview Drive, Bristol, IN, 46507 or vonalter2@verison.net or call 574-848-7899 with questions.

Valleyview Mennonite Church is located in the city of London (pop. 348,000), Ontario, in Middlesex County. We are presently looking for a ***full-time pastor*** and are inviting people to apply for this position. Interested candidates are asked to submit their resumé to the MCEC office at 4489 King St. East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2. Attention: Muriel Bechtel.

Goshen College seeks applicants or nominations for a full-time, tenure track ***economics professor*** to begin in August 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Iowa Mennonite School is seeking nominations and applications for a new ***administrator***. IMS is a high school with a vibrant atmosphere, stable and mature faculty and excellent facilities. IMS is deeply committed to delivering a secondary education embedded in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. Letters of application and nominations may be submitted to Atlee Yoder, Search Committee Chair, 1453 540th St. SW, Kalona, IA 52247, phone 319-656-5191, email atleeyod@kctc.net. Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

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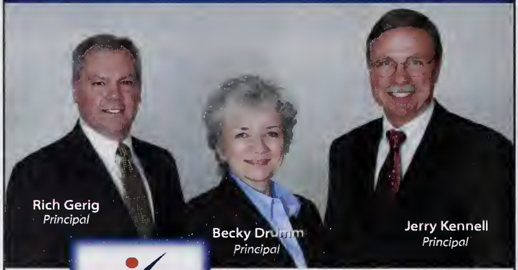

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Director of admissions: **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary** seeks a full-time ***director of admissions***, beginning Jan. 1, 2007, or when available. This person will develop, implement and monitor an overall strategy for recruitment of students for AMBS programs and oversee the director of financial aid. Qualifications include commitment to Jesus Christ and the mission of the Mennonite church, ability to communicate well and relate well to others, strong attention to details, proven supervisory and organizational skills, ability to think strategically and availability to travel 40-50 percent. AMBS is an equal opportunity employer; women and members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. To apply, send a resumé, three references, and letter of application by Dec. 8, 2006, to Ron Ringenberg, vice president, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or rringenb@ambs.edu.

Goshen College seeks applicants or nominations for a full-time, tenure track ***business professor*** to begin in August 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary invites applications and nominations for ***academic dean*** to assume responsibility on July 1, 2007. Candidates should be committed to Jesus Christ, the Scriptures and the church; embody Anabaptist faith and practice for witness in a post-Christian society; have vision for helping shape new modes of theological education; have successful teaching experience, preferably at the graduate level; and have supervisory, administrative and team-building skills. Candidates are required to hold a Ph.D or Th.D. Deadline for applications is Feb. 1, 2007. Send nominations, or letter of application with vitae, to J. Nelson Kraybill, President, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or nkraybill@ambs.edu.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., a private, liberal arts, undergraduate college affiliated with Mennonite Church USA, invites applications for the position of ***vice president for academic affairs***. See the Bethel College Web site at www.bethelks.edu/hr/openings/ for details or contact search committee for the vice president of academic affairs, Terri Headrick, Office of the President, theadrick@bethelks.edu

Couple needed for ***full-time ministry***: Sharing responsibility for part-time positions of food service, hosting, maintenance and housekeeping. Offering hospitality to the brothers and sisters of New York City at **Camp Deerpark**; Westbrookville, N.Y. Two- to three-year commitment desired. Requirement: deep commitment to Christ and his body through loving and sacrificial service. Email admin@campdeerpark.org, 845-754-8669.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., is currently accepting applications for the position of ***vice president of student life*** to begin July 1, 2007. The VP for student life is responsible to initiate and administer student life programs at Bethel College, reports directly to the president and serves on the executive cabinet. Master's degree in human relations and/or related field, and exceptional communication, interpersonal, organizational and problem-solving skills required. Candidates must sympathize with and advocate for the mission of Bethel College. A review of applicants will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. A professional vitae, three letters of reference and a detailed letter of application expressing how applicant might provide leadership to student life at Bethel may be sent to Paul T. Lewis, Ph.D., Chair of the VP for student life search committee, President's Office, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117. Bethel College is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer; email plewis@bethelks.edu. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply; www.bethelks.edu/position/hr/opening.

Colorado congregation seeks ***full-time transition pastor*** for one-year period (would consider ¾-time), beginning April, 2007. **Mountain Community Mennonite Church** is located 20 miles north of Colorado Springs and is part of the Mountain States Mennonite Conference. Contact Marc Yoder at 719-481-1898 or email m.yoder@adelphia.net.

Goshen College Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning positions. With a five-year grant from the Lilly Foundation, Goshen College is opening a new center to research dynamics of the changing ethnic composition in our area and its implications for higher education, increase college accessibility for Latino and other students and transform the learning community for all students. We are searching for candidates to fill the following positions, with start dates in early 2007. To apply for a position, please see the specific job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Goshen College seeks ***project director*** to develop Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning under five-year grant to increase college accessibility for Latino and other students, transform the learning community for all students, and research dynamics of the changing ethnic composition in our area and its implications for higher education. Ph.D. or Ed.D. required, plus higher education teaching and administration experience expected. To apply, see the job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Goshen College seeks ***director of curriculum, teaching and faculty development*** to lead activities of 5 year grant that foster curriculum/pedagogy initiatives across the curriculum with emphasis on expanding intercultural learning. Oversee general education and collegiate studies program, supervise registrar and provide faculty development to enhance cross-cultural learning. Ph.D. or Ed.D. and at least four to five years experience in higher education teaching, curriculum and faculty development, and strong administrative skills required. To apply, see the job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Goshen College seeks ***enrollment counselor*** to serve as a member of the enrollment team with primary responsibility for increasing accessibility of the college's education to Latino and other culturally diverse groups of students. As part of a five-year grant, will serve as single point of contact for prospective students and families, build relationships with community leaders in the region and be financial aid resource person for prospective and enrolled students. Master's degree preferred, bachelor required. Must be bilingual in Spanish and English. To apply, see the job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Goshen College seeks ***research director*** to lead grant-funded Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning in researching dynamics of changing ethnic composition in our area and its implications for higher education. Oversee work of visiting scholars, resident and student researchers, disseminate findings, organize on-campus discussions and work with national organizations. Ph.D. or Ed.D. required. Research and refereed publication required along with administrative experience expected. To apply, see the job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Columbia Bible College's Board of Directors is launching its search for Columbia's next ***president***. Columbia is an accredited four-year evangelical Anabaptist Bible College on Canada's West Coast with about 500 students. The president's role exists in order to lead the Columbia team in the fulfillment of its mission, to prepare people for a life of discipleship, service and ministry. For a full list of qualifications and a job description, please consult our Web site: www.columbiabc.edu. Please forward resumé by Dec. 31, 2006, to Brian Friesen, Board Chair, Columbia Bible College, 2940 Clearbrook Road, Abbotsford, BC V2T 2Z8, boardchair@columbiabc.edu. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed first to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Frazer (Pa.) Mennonite Church, located 25 miles west of Philadelphia, is seeking a ***full-time pastor***. Frazer is a suburban congregation of 125 members that desires an experienced pastor who is gifted in preaching and teaching and who shares our vision for community outreach, peace and justice ministries and active lay leadership. Please visit frazermennonite.org or contact Larry Massanari at 610-524-8332 or lmassanari@aol.com.

Waynesboro Mennonite Church is seeking a half-time to full-time person to serve as ***minister of youth and Christian education***. We are located 30 miles south of Harrisonburg, Va., an easy drive for those interested in attending Eastern Mennonite Seminary. For information contact Howard Miller, Pastor, at 540-949-0446 or pastorhoward@ntelos.net.

Bluffton University invites inquiries, nominations and applications for position of ***director of buildings and grounds***. Director of buildings and grounds is responsible for providing leadership for the stewardship of Bluffton's facilities and grounds including preventative maintenance, supervision of new construction and building renovation, custodial services, utilities, environmental and safety compliance, periodic space analysis of its facilities and care of the campus grounds. Director will suggest new facility technology utilized in construction and renovations enhancing more efficient use of resources. Salary commensurate with university salary scale.

Candidates must have a bachelor's degree in building construction and management, engineering, business or a related field as well as experience indicating professional growth. Excellent written, verbal, analytical, interpersonal and supervisory skills are required. Review of applications begins immediately and accepted until the position is filled. Campus information can be found at www.bluffton.edu. Deadline for accepting materials is Dec. 15, 2006. Interested individuals should send a cover letter, resumé, employee application (available online), and names and contact information for three references to: Julie Krupp, Director of Human Resources, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all qualified applicants who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse it.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

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Finding my roots

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is director of admissions and financial aid at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

I can still picture the cover of the thick paperback *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, Alex Haley's tome chronicling the passage of his African forebears into slavery and life in North America. Published in 1976, the book gave names, faces and fully rounded stories to the millions of Africans that African-American schoolchildren like myself had learned in our fourth grade social studies classes to understand simply as slaves. Two years after the publication of *Roots*, the miniseries debuted on television, and history records that 85 percent of people watching television were watching *Roots* during its eight-night presentation.

Roots captured the imagination of people across the demographic spectrum, but its meaning for African-Americans was significant. Certainly there were conscientious individuals and families in the black community with strong interest and connections to the African continent. After all, this time period was not so far removed from the Civil Rights and Black Power movements—after all, this was part of the context that fed Haley's hunger to search out his roots.

For many of us, however, Africa was long ago and far away—so long ago and far away it seemed to have nothing to do with us. But with *Roots*, suddenly many couples were giving their newborns African or African-sounding names. People were searching out their genealogies. There was renewed interest in visiting countries on the continent, particularly in West Africa.

For those three weeks, we were marvelously hosted by sisters and brothers who welcomed us without reservation because of our connectedness in Christ.

In my own family, the farthest I am able to trace my roots is to a great-grandparent on my mother's side. I've long been envious of those who can name their foremothers and forefathers, going back not only generations but centuries.

Three years ago, my daughter (then 12) and I took our first trip to Africa. We traveled to Nigeria in an intergenerational, interracial group of 24 from our home church. The visit reciprocated one made to our home community nine years earlier by a group of women who related to Mennonite Central Committee in Nigeria. These women, the Servant Singers, and their families hosted us in their homes for the duration of our visit.

After our long journey (a drive to Detroit, then a flight to London, then to Abuja, then a drive to Jos), we were met by the women and their family members, who burst into song upon our arrival, welcoming us to their home, our home. I promptly burst into tears, and to this day I imagine heaven must be like this—a chorus of angels singing praises to God, embracing one another and dancing for joy.

I had no grand ideas about a homecoming to the African continent that would suddenly answer all my questions about who I was and who were my kin. I had some longing for that, to be sure. People were eager to talk to us about the connections between our communities; one man told me that even though I didn't know exactly where it was, it was a good thing I had gotten a little closer to the village of my family.

As we traveled about, it was fun to see people who looked like they could be related to me and to imagine that we were somehow connected. My daughter was constantly mistaken for being Nigerian; for much of the trip, she felt right at home.

It was a wonderful, important time, not nearly long enough, and I know that one day I will return. Yet the genius of the trip for me did not rest solely on making symbolic connections to my racial/ethnic roots and claiming a distant part of my family. It was in naming and claiming once again my membership in God's family, the family that is not limited by bloodlines, national boundaries, even time and space. My family is comprised of God's people, scattered throughout the earth. For those three weeks, we were marvelously hosted by sisters and brothers who welcomed us without reservation because of our connectedness in Christ. Our real home is within God's reign, our real family is each other.

It is important to note that celebration of this fact does not claim or advocate for a colorblind Christian consciousness that denies or ignores long histories of pain and suffering, domination and oppression based upon differences. Rather it holds out hope that we may learn to listen well to the God who calls us to welcome the stranger, do justice and love kindness. It holds out hope that we may indeed take seriously the ministry of reconciliation. The differences among us are many, but our center is the same. TM

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Fjaere Harder is program coordinator of North Baltimore Mennonite Church's Asylum Seeker's Network and is shown here with the child of an asylum seeker. She is one of many Mennonite Voluntary Service workers contributing to the ministry of Mennonite Mission Network

This MVS worker nurtures global connections without leaving home

Through Asylum Seekers Housing Network, a program of North Baltimore Mennonite Church (NBMC), Fjaere Harder has discovered a profound connection. With refugees who come to the United States fleeing persecution, and with other Mennonite Church USA members serving in their own communities and internationally.

Harder works at Reservoir Hill House of Peace, the old mansion NBMC turned into a transitional home for refugees and asylum seekers from Cameroon, Afghanistan, the Congo and other countries. As Harder helps people facing major upheaval in their lives, she models not only what it means to be a Mennonite – but also what it means to be a Christian and an American. And as she addresses the needs of refugees from around the world, Harder recognizes the need for all parts of Mennonite Church USA to think beyond ourselves and reach out in mission and service to others in need – wherever we are.

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Anna Groff

Young adults and bomb shelters

Despite leading ambiguous and confusing lives, many young adults want to remain connected to the Mennonite church. But even the description "young adult" is ambiguous.

During several informal conversations at two young adult conferences this fall (Nov. 7, pages 22-23), I heard my peers asking, "Who, technically, is a young adult?" and, "How long can I consider myself a young adult?"

We discussed the possibilities. Perhaps young adults are unmarried or those of us still in school. Maybe the term refers to people who have not yet started a family. However, most agreed that the status of young adulthood is self-defined and more of a mindset than an actual stage in life.

According to a University of Chicago survey, adolescence can extend well beyond the teen years; some people up to age 26 still consider themselves adolescents.

If the line between adults and young adults continues to blur and the average "age" of young adults increases, I wondered what that could mean in church settings. Wendell Loewen, professor at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan., described the unfortunate divide between young people—especially those in high school—and older adults as a "bomb shelter."

Young adults named pacifism, simple living, accountability, service and community as values to which they connect.

Loewen said that often young people feel secure supporting and interacting with each other, so they remain "below" and away from the adult activities as if hiding in a bomb shelter. They leave the shelter only when it's absolutely necessary for them to enter the adult realm, and then they only stay as long as required.

If this "bomb shelter" exists with high school students, does it also exist for young adults? If it does, the consequences trouble me, especially if many young adults consider themselves adolescents until age 26. At the two churchwide young adult meetings I covered for *The Mennonite*, I did not witness "bomb shelter" separation. Instead I sensed a genuine desire for connection between younger and older adults at the meetings.

Most young adults I talked to expressed a real commitment to Anabaptism and found value in things of the past. They named pacifism, simple living, accountability, service and community as core values to which they connect. They both affirmed the current church and named ways they want to further the work of the church.

Returning to my home congregation in Lancaste Pa., earlier this fall, I attended the young adult Sunday school class that packed out a classroom. There were many new faces. I was struck with the enthusiasm from these young adults who did not consider my congregation their "home congregation" but now appeared to fully invest in it. Most of them, finished with college and perhaps living in a city relatively new to them, wanted a community of people with similar values and life goals.

But in some circles in the Mennonite church, "bomb shelters" still exist. Young people feel isolat from the church because of negative experiences, they feel like the church does not have any relevance to their daily lives. Older adults may not kno how to react to these feelings, and that exacerbates the separation.

To help connect with young adults, congregatio must acknowledge the difficulties facing young adults in the church and be prepared when they ris from their "bomb shelter."

First, there are logistical challenges. Many youn adults feel constantly on the go and without a place to call home. Second, many have overseas experiences that expand their worldviews far beyond tho of members in their home congregations. This becomes a tension to reconcile. Third, they may fe frustrated with decision-making and policies within their congregation, the denomination and church agencies.

However, many young people do seek peers and other people for accountability, support and fellowship. Many look to the church for this community, despite their frustrations.

If congregations give priority to this need and young adults take responsibility, valuable connections between the two groups will grow.—*ag*

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

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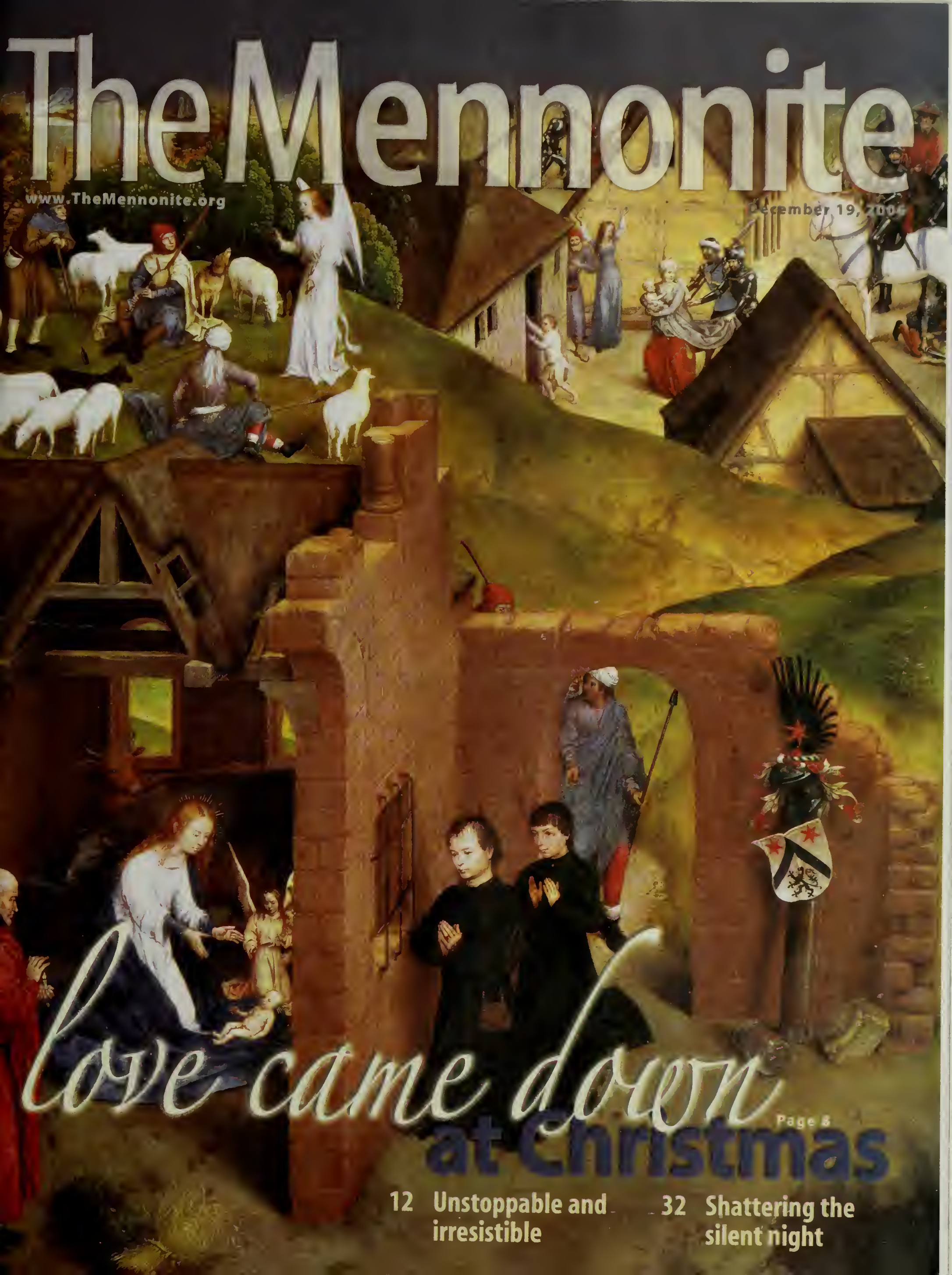

love came down at Christmas

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32 Shattering the silent night

Waiting in hope

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

When I was a child, I could not wait for Christmas to come. Weeks before, I'd leaf through the Sears catalog of dreams and decide what to put on my Christmas list. There was a measure of greed in this pursuit, I know, but from this distance it seems wonderfully innocent. Imagine believing that all I needed to make me happy was a genuine "The Man from U.N.C.L.E." briefcase complete with hidden camera and other spy toys. Those days are long gone. Like "The Man From Uncle" and the Sears catalog, my innocent longings are but memories.

It's probably just as well. I knew Christmas gifts would not really make me happy. Not to say that I didn't want them. I did. And for a time they provided a measure of joy.

Even now, as I settle into my usual holiday melancholy, I cannot help smiling as I remember the blurred images of clandestine councils of boy secret agents. We knew there was evil in the world and that its influence could be felt even in our own homes and hearts. In our childish righteousness, we wanted to join Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin in defeating it and its agents. Perhaps what still makes me smile is not so much the memory of long lost toys but the naïve view of a world in which evil was so easily vanquished.

Growing up has its costs. Once I lay awake waiting for the sound of reindeer on the roof. In later years, I lay awake worrying about the gifts I'd purchased for our sons and how they would be received. Now I fall asleep Christmas Eve and wake up the next morning as I do any other day.

Once I believed evil could be overcome with a well-placed karate chop. Then I came to believe that evil could be defeated through a peaceful demonstration of love. Now I wonder when God will redeem us from what we have made of this world, having no faith at all in the ability of human beings to slow evil down, let alone vanquish it altogether.

This season awakens a longing within me, a longing rooted at once in loss and hope. Looking back can be hard. Remembering when I was young and innocent and still unaware of the sorrow of our world is enough to make me weep. I weep selfishly, perhaps, as I consider what's been lost to me. And I weep in empathy as I realize that the sorrow was there all along, and only the privilege of a comfortable childhood made it possible for me to be innocent at all. Looking back, I find myself feeling sad, out of step with what is supposed to be a season of mirth.

Looking ahead is no easier. The prophets of Advent warn of dire things coming, of wars and rumors of wars and terrible signs in the heavens and on earth. I have little trouble believing them.

But those same prophets speak of a promise, of an unspeakable hope in the form of a baby both innocent and mild. And I wonder if it can be true. In my head I know Christ came. But in my heart, do I believe he'll come again? In my heart, do I believe that hope remains, that it is not lost but simply well concealed beneath the tinsel and the lights, the sounds of commerce and the evening news?

I can't say anymore that I much look forward to Christmas presents. But I do keep looking for even the smallest sign of hope, the tiniest flicker of light shining through the darkness in my spirit and in our world. And I long for that light to fill the skies and for hope to come riding on the clouds, bringing healing in its wings.

Maybe I will lie awake this Christmas Eve after all, waiting and hoping for the last best gift of all. Come, Lord Jesus.

This article is available as an audio file at www.The Mennonite.org

TheMennonite

Vol. 9, No. 24, December 19, 2006

Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
Editor@TheMennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
GordonH@TheMennonite.org
Assistant Editor: **Anna Groff**
AnnaG@themennonite.org
Advertising Coordinator: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Advertising@TheMennonite.org
Circulation Manager: **Rebecca Helmuth**
Subscriptions@TheMennonite.org
Editorial Assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

Web site: www.TheMennonite.org

Offices:
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 Main St., P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

1251 Virginia Ave.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
phone: 540-434-2556
fax: 540-434-5556

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is normally published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Goshen, IN 46526. Subscription rates: $41.95 (U.S) or $60.60 (CDN) per year. Group rates available. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

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Send form 3579 to:
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1700 S. Main St.
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Cover: Nativity and Annunciation of the Shepherds, detail from "The Seven Joys of Mary" by Flemish painter Hans Memling (1425/40-1494). ©Scala/Art Resource, NY

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Missional Mennonites

Thanks to Susan Biesecker-Mast and her exploration of "Missional Mennonites" (Nov. 21). As co-pastor of a congregation eagerly experimenting with missional transformation, I find her clarity on seemingly opposite polarities helpful. Embracing distinctive Anabaptist-Mennonite habits and practices on a both-and continuum instead of an either-or dichotomy provides a solid foundation for missional engagement. Anthropologist Paul Hiebert explores the connection between a culture's core values (worldview, beliefs, feelings, values) and surface traits (how we enact the core values, what it looks like). I hear Biesecker-Mast calling for a stronger connection between the two, not sacrificing one for the other. Put another way, our Anabaptist history and theology provides a solid, if not unique, foundation for us to become missional Mennonites.—*Jim S. Amstutz, Akron, Pa.*

In "Missional Mennonites," Sue Biesecker-Mast employs the use of words well. In our postmodern world, words change meanings rapidly from context to context. Words are vying for our attention everywhere. From cute slogans of megachurches to fast-talking radio jocks, words are a "dime a dozen." We as Mennonites have much more to offer our world as we engage our culture with the way we live. Learning to be invitational as a separate people may be our missional cutting edge. Thanks for another stimulating article.—*Dayvid Graybill, Wadsworth, Ohio*

Questions for Mennonite Central Committee

So Lowell Detweiler is the new acting executive director at Mennonite Central Committee ("Detweiler Named Acting MCC Director," Nov. 7)? Interesting. Thanks for the resumé on him—nothing new there for many of us. But how is it that MCC needs a new leader? Will the next announcement be that Anna Groff is the new editor of *The Mennonite*? No problem with Anna, but what happened to the existing editor?

The New Testament way is to speak the truth in love—not sugarcoat or deny or ignore the truth. The Bible presents its characters holistically, warts and all. I imagine there is something delicate about the situation here—you are not known for glossing over facts—but it seems to me you must say more than you have. Could you invite former executive Robb Davis to write a paragraph or two explaining his leaving? If that writing is too one-sided or not forthcoming, could you couple it with a paragraph by the chair of the MCC executive committee?—*Maynard Shirk, Conestoga, Pa.*

Editor's note: For more information about the leadership crisis at Mennonite Central Committee, see "MCC Executive Committee Calls for Unity" (News Digest, Nov. 21). Anna Groff continues as assistant editor of The Mennonite.

Pastor died from hypothermia

I would like to make some corrections to the story "Retired Pastor, Two Others, Drown in Accident" (News Digest, Nov. 21). My father, Willard Handrich, was not a carpenter but a skilled woodsman and sawmill owner. He did do some woodworking in later years. Willard, his son Eldon and Eldon's wife, Maggie, all struggled in the water, but not for hours. When the boat capsized, Willard, Eldon and Bob Nyman, the survivor, all made it back to the boat. Eldon left the boat and tried unsuccessfully to rescue Maggie. Willard saw him go under. The wind carried Maggie, who was wearing a life preserver, away from the boat. She died of hypothermia and possibly drowning. Her body washed up on the shores of Montreal Island near Wawa, Quebec, on Nov. 12.

Willard did not drown. He survived several hours after the accident lying over the keel of the boat with waves washing over the lower part of his body. At some point, Bob saw his body go limp, and then the next wave washed him away.

Our family is grateful for Bob's survival, as he was able to tell us what happened. He was dressed warmly and was sitting on top of the capsized boat with waves washing over his feet and legs. He was not in the water clinging to the boat.

Rod Handrich of Denver should have been listed as Willard's surviving son. On behalf of my family I would like to thank readers who have shared our grief and upheld us in prayer.—*Carla Handrich Stoltzfus, Lakewood, Colo.*

IN THIS ISSUE

This Christmas issue has a special cover. The artwork by Flemish painter Hans Memling carries the tension of the Nativity: Roman soldiers taking away and killing babies (in the background) while worshipers gather around the infant Jesus. Marlene Kropf (page 8) describes the first Christmas as the day love came down, "filling the cracks and crevices of despair in our world with hope." To describe this love, Jen Helmuth Shenk (page 12) tells the story of an irresistible kitten—that wormed his way into her parents' house—to describe the coming of the Christ-child in Bethlehem: "God used something irresistible to reach us." But today, many Palestinian Christians who live near Bethlehem are increasingly silenced. Timothy Seidel (page 14) describes the "erosion of Christianity" in the place where love came down.—*Editor*

Mentoring led to ministry

It was a delight to read articles by Dan Longenecker and Gerald Shenk in the Nov. 7 issue. The articles were good, but what really filled me with joy was remembering the mentoring my husband and I received from these men and their equally capable spouses. It was not formal mentoring but relational as we joined hands to build Immanuel Mennonite Church in the early 1990s. They invited us into the work and made room for our novice participation and youthful idealism. It was challenging and exciting and sold me on ministry. —*Tana Pelkey-Landes, Perkasie, Pa.*

Response to Keith Landis

I have a question to ask Keith Landis ("Abortion A Single Issue Vote," Readers Say, Nov. 21). How can you vote for a candidate that is antiabortion but prowar—which kills a multitude of people including innocent ones? This view effectively says it is wrong to kill a person before they are born but OK to kill them after they are born.—*Mervin Swartzentruber, Goshen, Ind.*

Why dialogue with Catholics?

Yet another Catholic Archdiocese is paying a hefty settlement for lawsuits involving sexual abuse by Catholic priests. This is for $60 million and brings settlement costs to a total of $1.5 billion to the Catholic Church. There are more sexual abuse cases that remain unsettled.

Could someone please explain why Mennonite Church USA has such a great desire to dialogue with a church body that has such a terrible record of sexual abuse among the clergy? And why does Mennonite Church USA, which worships regularly at the altar of Anabaptism, support the dialogue process with Catholics, who insist on infant baptism. I note in some *Mennonite Weekly Review* articles that Mennonite Church USA strongly supports efforts to distance itself from evangelical groups that strongly support believer's baptism. The inconsistencies of Mennonite Church USA on these issues are difficult to understand.—*Dale Welty, Wakarusa, Ind.*

Losing nonresistance?

I recently read Ellie Weisel's book *Night.* It is the story of Ellie and his family, who in 1944 were taken forcibly to a Nazi concentration camp. Wonderful human beings were loaded into boxcars like cattle, beaten and cursed and forced to march from Auschwitz to Buchenwald. Hundreds of people died on the way. Every so often they had selections in which people were singled out to be taken to the crematoriums, where they were burned to death.

Had I been in control of an army, would I have set out to free the Jewish people, even though my army would have to kill German soldiers to do so? I decided that I would. I would be using force to negate violence. To allow the Jewish people to continue to suffer and die would have been inhumane.

Suppose I had been in the Amish schoolhouse where the children were terrorized and had a loaded gun. Would I have used it to either maim or kill the gunman? I would. My decision is based in part on the fact that I would rather suffer from the guilt of maiming or killing a man than to suffer from the guilt of standing by while a gunman murdered innocent children. Here again, I would be using force to stop violence.

As a Mennonite minister for 20 years, I often preached on peace and nonresistance. But when confronted with these situations, I found that I would be willing to use force to confront violence.

Am I losing my stance on nonresistance? Or am I becoming more of a realist and less of an idealist? I can even see nonresistant Christians serving as law officers in some settings. I cannot see Christians serving in the U.S. military, but I could see them serving in a multinational peacekeeping force. Where have I gone wrong? Or have I? —*Richard Hostetler, Goshen, Ind.*

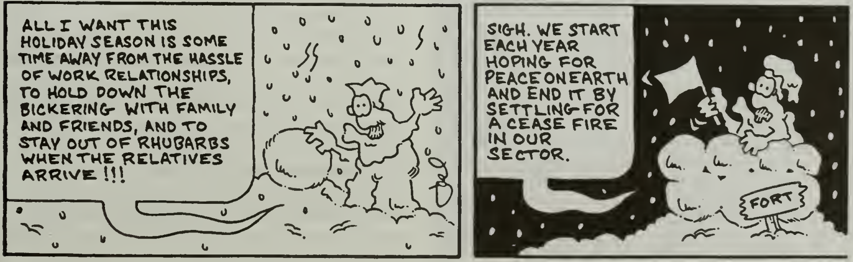
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

My congregation observes the Advent season (61 votes):

- ○ All four Sundays (85%)
- ○ Some Sundays (3%)
- ○ We do not observe Advent (7%)
- ○ Not sure (5%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


ALL I WANT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON IS SOME TIME AWAY FROM THE HASSLE OF WORK RELATIONSHIPS, TO HOLD DOWN THE BICKERING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AND TO STAY OUT OF RHUBARBS WHEN THE RELATIVES ARRIVE!!!
SIGH. WE START EACH YEAR HOPING FOR PEACE ON EARTH AND END IT BY SETTLING FOR A CEASE FIRE IN OUR SECTOR.
FORT

IN BRIEF

Zooks honored for work in Congo

MMA recognized John and Jeanne Zook Nov. 12 for their lifelong dedication to serving the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Steve Martin, MMA's senior vice president of marketing, presented the 2006 Journey Award to the Zooks at Peace Mennonite Church, Portland, Ore. The Zooks have spent much of their lives serving the medical needs of people in Congo, a nation ravaged by civil war. John, a surgeon, and Jeanne, a nurse, worked in the African country off and on for many years, returning many times to offer mentoring and support to medical personnel there.—*MMA*

Goshen runner All-American

Senior Petrana Petkova from Bulgaria captured her third NAIA All-American honor in a Goshen (Ind.) College uniform—and fourth overall—at the Nov. 18 NAIA National Championships in Louisville, Ky., becoming the school's first-ever three-time NAIA All-American in the sport, male or female. Petkova finished the race in a time of 18:34.30, good for 20th place—the top 30 runners acquire All-American status. Senior Laura Herr (Linden, Wis.) and sophomore Laura Harnish (Flanagan, Ill.) finished 111th and 154th, respectively.—*Goshen College*

Global membership almost 1.5 million

Mennonite World Conference has released the Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and Related Churches World Directory 2006. New numbers show membership in the 217 churches now listed in 75 countries around the world is just under 1.5 million (1,478,540). Africa, with 529,703 members, continues to have the largest and fastest-growing membership among the five continental regions. The Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) in Ethiopia is the largest national conference globally, with 130,727 members, ahead of Mennonite Church USA, with 110,696 members. All regions except Europe have increased membership.

The 2003 World Directory listed 200 bodies in 65 countries with a total membership of 1,297,716.

Africa has stretched its membership lead over North America by some 30,000, a 17.2 percent increase since 2003.

Membership in North America in 2006 has grown to 499,664, an increase of 10.7 percent. However, the increase is partly due to changes in reporting, since the new number includes more independent groups. Another factor in the larger number is the rapid growth among Old Order groups, due to large families and a 90 percent retention rate among their youth.—*MWC*

Philadelphia Urban Min
Leadership Devel
Business Development. Id
We are a John

Kris Eden

Packing the peace of Christ instead of a gun

A Psalm 150 praise dance team from Church of the Overcomer, including Minister Erica Smith, perform at a Nov. 17-18 conference on gun violence in Philadelphia. More than 100 urban youth and members of local Anabaptist churches came to Packing the Peace of Christ, which focused on a Christian response to hand-gun homicide, which takes an average of one life per day in Philadelphia. The conference drafted a letter that will be sent to rural and suburban Anabaptist congregations in Southeast Pennsylvania asking for their support in pressing for more effective hand-gun legislation. —*Mennonite Central Committee*

LMS receives $2 million matching gift

LANCASTER, Pa.—Lancaster Mennonite School has received a $2 million matching gift, the largest cash gift in the school's history. The gift will help provide for the proposed academic building and welcome center planned for the Lancaster campus of LMS. Calvin and Janet High, friends of the school, made the contribution.

Cost for the new facility is estimated at $12 million, including $3 million for endowment. With money raised before the match was offered, LMS will break ground if the donors' $2 million is matched with another $2 million. The school has received $750,000 toward the match, and the $2 million must be met by June 30, 2007.

With the matching challenge, LMS will move into the final design phase for the academic facility. Dale Yoder of Cornerstone Architects is leading the design team. The academic building will include 18 classrooms, science labs and a welcoming center that includes office space for system-wide personnel.

According to Heidi Stoltzfus, director of advancement, the school board's goal is to make the new facility "as green as economically feasible," meaning they will consider environmentally friendly construction elements.

Lancaster Mennonite School has 1,648 total students enrolled, which includes 758 high school students, 350 middle school students and 540 elementary students.—*LMS*

Plumbing problems prompt office move

ELKHART, Ind.—Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership and Mennonite Mission Network decided to relocate to a new office in Elkhart, beginning Dec. 18.

Denominational officials on Dec. 5 signed a lease for a vacant building that had housed a credit union. The two-story, 20,000-square-foot facility is about two miles from the current office in an 83-year-old hotel in downtown Elkhart that has been home to Mennonite denominational offices since 1974. The offices employ 62 people.

The current offices have experienced nearly two dozen water leaks in the past year, including major breaks on June 21 and Nov. 5, both of which

Jim Bishop

MU students wrap up some Yule cheer

ika Detweiler (left) and Kristi Wenger, students at Eastern
ennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., wrap and label pres-
ts for delivery to the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Department
Social Services and the local Big Brothers/Big Sisters pro-
am. The EMU community responded to an annual appeal
om the social work and sociology department with more than
,500 in contributions. Around 15 students, mostly social work
ajors, used the funds to purchase clothing and toys from local
tail outlets and wrapped and labeled the gifts.—*EMU*

affected both floors in the east wing.

Contact information for the new offices of Mission Network and Executive Leadership—phone numbers, mailing addresses and email addresses—will remain the same.

This year denominational officials approved a capital campaign to build a new office building on property adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus in Elkhart.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Javanese Mennonites visit North America

NEWTON, Kan.—Four representatives from Gereja Injili Tanah Jawa (Javanese Mennonite Church) visited the Mennonite Church USA Great Plains office in Newton Nov. 17. The group's visit was part of a one-month tour of the United States to meet and network with North American Mennonite church leaders to strengthen and increase avenues of exchange and mutual learning.

Teguh Sayogo, Adi Walujo, Moses Susila and Suprijadi talked with Mennonite Church USA staff about their experiences leading Mennonite congregations in Muslim areas. Walujo told of an experience in his village, where the local Muslim imam closed the Mennonites' church building. The Mennonites then worshiped outside. When the village suffered from a shortage of water, the Mennonites allowed everyone, including the Muslims, to use water from the well on their property. Soon the imam opened their building. Walujo said their practice of nonretaliation led to peace.

The Javanese Mennonite Church is a large body in Indonesia with about 43,000 members, and its history goes back more than 150 years. —*Gordon Houser and Mennonite Church USA*

Bluffton students protest against torture

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Eleven Bluffton University students joined 22,000 individuals Nov. 17-19, in experiencing firsthand how powerful the message of peace can be when those who advocate for peace band together. Traveling to Fort Benning, Ga., PEACE Club members attended a weekend-long peace rally, protesting against the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), formerly known as the School of the Americas (SOA). The combat training facility for Latin American soldiers has been shrouded in controversy for years, accused of including torture principles in its curriculum.

Organized by SOA Watch, a nonviolent grassroots movement that seeks to close WHINSEC and change oppressive U.S. foreign policy the facility represents, the weekend began with a general assembly, outlining the facility's history of social injustice and the fight to close the facility. Attendees listened to people from Colombia and other Latin American countries, aided by translators, tell stories of how their lives have been tragically altered by the work of those trained at WHINSEC.—*Bluffton University*

Historic elections in Congo successful

AKRON, Pa.—Historic elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo culminated in the Dec. 6 inauguration of Joseph Kabila as the country's first democratically elected president in over 40 years.

Congolese Mennonite churches welcomed the elections and encouraged their members to vote and run for office. Forty Congolese Mennonites ran for parliament, and three were elected in a crowded field of more than 9,000 candidates.

They expressed relief that their country held national elections after decades of corrupt dictatorship and two recent wars. Congo's roughly 200,000 Mennonites hope the elections will begin a new era for their country, according to Pascal Kulungu, a Mennonite Brethren lay leader in the capital, Kinshasa.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Ten Thousand Villages wins Co-op America award

Co-op America awarded its second annual People's Choice Award for Green Business of the Year to Idealbite.com, Ten Thousand Villages and Joe Coffee bar on Nov. 10. Ten Thousand Villages, the recipient of last year's People's Choice Award, is this year's recipient of the special Longtime Leadership Award, in recognition of its especially strong standing two years in a row. Ten Thousand Villages has been providing a fair income to developing world artisans by marketing their handicrafts through a nonprofit network of stores in North America (and now online) for 60 years.—*Co-op America*

Bridging the gap

Since 1972, Neill and Edith von Gunten have been using a small, nearly invisible little quarterly magazine called *Intotemak* to share stories among non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples. With only 1,300 subscriptions and about twice that many readers, the paper also makes its way to about 100 homes in the United States, Hong Kong, Paraguay and Argentina. When Native groups come together to share common experiences, borders are erased, say the von Guntens. For Aboriginal people, story sharing is a way of bridging differences, passing on knowledge and building relationships. —*Mennonite Church Canada*

Love came down at Christmas

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A Christmas meditation

by Marlene Kropf

It must have been a time much like ours. You couldn't stuff enough rags in the cracks to keep the cold wind from seeping in at the edges. Beyond the small circle of warmth and light created by the fire, the world was menacing and cold.

An insecure, power-hungry ruler held the land in an iron grip. Ruthlessly defending his throne, he used his might not to protect the poor but to sustain the rich and line the coffers of his friends.

Life on the streets or on lonely stretches between villages was dangerous. Desperate to live, the poor robbed travelers and fought among themselves. Children were hungry, and the blind and crippled were forced to beg.

Even religion was corrupt. Leaders forgot their high calling as they marketed their wares, competed with one another for the limelight and made cozy deals with political allies.

Into such a world a child was born. His parents were away from home at the time and found temporary shelter in a barn. Later they fled the country, under threat, and became refugees until it was safe to return home. This child of such perilous beginnings grew up to be called the Son of Man (or the Human One).

In her poem "Love Came Down at Christmas" (#208, *Hymnal: A Worship Book*), Christina Rossetti reflects on that birth from the distance of many centuries:

"Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine.
Love was born at Christmas—star and angels gave the sign."

While at first glance the lines appear far removed from the messy reality of barns and mangers or flights of terror, Rossetti has captured instead the moment when everyone's attention is caught by the marvel of birth. It still happens today. When new parents walk into a room holding their child, everyone's eyes instinctively turn to the baby. Conversation ceases, and our hearts are filled with wonder that love has created such beauty. Whatever we were just talking about seems unimportant. A flicker of hope shines, and, momentarily, we forget the duty or drudgery or disappointment of daily life.

In the second stanza, Rossetti gazes deeper into the mystery:

"Worship we the Godhead, love incarnate, love divine.
Worship we our Jesus—what shall be our sacred sign?"

Life on the streets or on lonely stretches between villages was dangerous. Desperate to live, the poor robbed travelers and fought among themselves. Children were hungry, and the blind and crippled were forced to beg.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

A season of 12 days: Affirming this child as both human and divine, the poet joins company with Christians throughout history who have recognized God at work in the birth of this baby. In fact, the church eventually set aside a season of 12 days—Christmas—to celebrate the Feast of the Incarnation.

In the dark winter of the calendar of the Northern Hemisphere, a space has been created for pondering God's identity and God's work. The God of the ancient Hebrews, who made a covenant and declared, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Jeremiah 7:23) has pulled back the curtains and unveiled a further intention: I am among you—in flesh like yours (Matthew 1:23).

Such a revelation is astounding. God has come near—lives, breathes, eats, sleeps among us, suckles a mother's breast, cries out in fear and distress. Love has come down from the far reaches of heaven and entered our world in the same bloody, pain-and-delight-filled-journey as any human. The birth of Jesus establishes the world as a beloved place, a place where God chooses to dwell.

Too strenuous for any of us to fulfill on our own, the embodiment of God's love is best seen in a community, a people.

Echoing the blessing given in creation, the incarnation affirms God's passionate attraction to our world. One of God's servants who caught an extraordinary glimpse of that magnificent commitment meditated for years on the wonder of God's creative love, holding it as the core of all that exists, the dynamic energy that keeps the universe in motion. In 1373 Julian of Norwich wrote: "There is no created being who can know how much and how sweetly and how tenderly the Creator loves us. God is endless delight. God is maker and lover and keeper of all that is" (*Showings*, Paulist Press, 1978).

Yet the birth and even the incarnation is not the end of the story. What Rossetti points toward and what Christmas points to is another feast 12 days later, the Feast of Epiphany. In the story we tell at Epiphany, a star lures eastern astrologers to seek and worship the One in whom God's revelation dwells. Kneeling in awe, the strangers behold the unfolding mystery: the glorious light of revelation that led them to Bethlehem now spreads beyond the manger and through the cracks in the walls to the whole world.

Thus the revelation is not just about love but about a never-ending love that expands forever. The fullness of God that came to dwell in Jesus is the same fullness intended for every one of God's children. As the Son of Man (or the Human One), Jesus reflects God's dream for humanity. In his one unique, unrepeatable life, Jesus fulfilled God's desire for the fullness of love to be made known in human flesh. Thoroughly joined with God's intentions, Jesus shows the way—the way of love—that can become visible in every life and in the whole creation.

Sacred sign: In response to the revelation of such love, Rossetti asks, "What shall be our sacred sign?" Other ways of asking her question might be: How shall we demonstrate our gratitude for God's commitment to us? How shall we worship? How shall we live?

Answering her own question in the third stanza, she says:

"Love shall be our token, love be yours and love be mine,
love to God and neighbor, love for pray'r and gift and sign."

In other words, only one response will do. As we receive the love of God made known in Jesus, we offer that love in every thought and action of our lives. Because God's life is incarnate in us, we embody and express that life in ever-expanding circles of grace and mercy and peace.

It sounds simple but isn't. Two thousand years later, God's way of love still seems dim and mostly untried. Perhaps that's because the sign is not meant to be enacted by individuals alone but by the body of Christ. Too strenuous for any of us to fulfill on our own, the embodiment of God's love is best seen in a community, a people. Together we participate in the Spirit-filled life of the Christian community, supporting and encouraging the risky commitment of loving God and others and ourselves with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

The book of Ephesians affirms the church as the chosen vessel for God's ongoing revelation of love in the world. Fully aware of its faults and deficiencies and waywardness, God calls the church to make known the mystery of God's gift to the world, thus participating in the eternal purpose God carried out in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:10-11). In other words, the church is the place where the loving way of Jesus is to be seen, known and embraced.

What does it look like when the church embraces such love? A simple but remarkable example is one I saw several years ago. My husband and I, with several other North Americans, were invited guests of the Sant'Egidio Community in Rome (see www.santegidio.org/en/). They wanted to know how Mennonites build peace in our context. Though we gladly told them our stories, the most important thing that happened was what we experienced as we lived among them.

Begun in 1968 by a group of high school students who wanted to live the gospel more faithfully in their daily lives, the Sant'Egidio Community has become a worldwide community of more than 50,000 Christians who live by three simple commitments: They gather every day for common prayer, they make friends across boundaries (race, nationality, class, age, religion) in ordinary everyday contexts and they serve the poor in face-to-face encounters every week.

Prayer, friendship and service: It was easy for us to enter their daily common prayer each evening from 8:30-9 p.m.—a mostly sung service (in rich harmonies reminiscent of Orthodox chant) that included a short meditation on a Gospel reading. During the day we went along as they served meals to the homeless in a cheerful dining room with cloth-covered tables, where each guest was known by name, or out to the gypsy camp, where we drank tea and Turkish coffee with a family who had been visited faithfully by a member of the community every week for 17 years. We watched as they welcomed strangers, engaging warmly and personally with all who came to visit. Over and over we saw the love of Christ shining through them. We marveled when they told us this way of being church was carried out with almost no paid staff. Each person who participated in the community simply made a commitment to the three pillars: prayer, friendship and service to the poor.

One could scoff at such simplicity—but then we heard the story of how they worked behind the scenes to make peace during a civil war in Mozambique. In the spirit of friendship, they brought leaders of the warring factions to their home in Rome, fed them, prayed for them and made space for them to talk to each other in a safe place. That was all. And a peace treaty was signed and kept.

Angels still rejoice as they did on the night Jesus was born when God's people join to become the heart and hands and feet of Christ in the world.

In such a time as ours, Love still comes down at Christmas when the church continues the incarnation of Christ in such peaceful and loving ways. Angels still rejoice as they did on the night Jesus was born when God's people join to become the heart and hands and feet of Christ in the world.

In the joyful conclusion to her poem-meditation, Rossetti simply repeats, "Sing noel, sing noel." Like the poet, we are left without words or deeds adequate to express our love. Yet at Christmas—and at all times—the best gift we may offer is the adoration of our hearts. As we ponder the mystery of Emmanuel, God-with-us, our lives will become a song of praise, filling the cracks and crevices of despair in our world with hope. Sing noel.

Marlene Kropf is minister of worship, congregational and ministerial leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

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Unstoppable

A kitten and the baby Jesus

by Jen Helmuth Shenk

I ran to my mother with the news; surely there could be an exception to the commandment about no animals in the house.

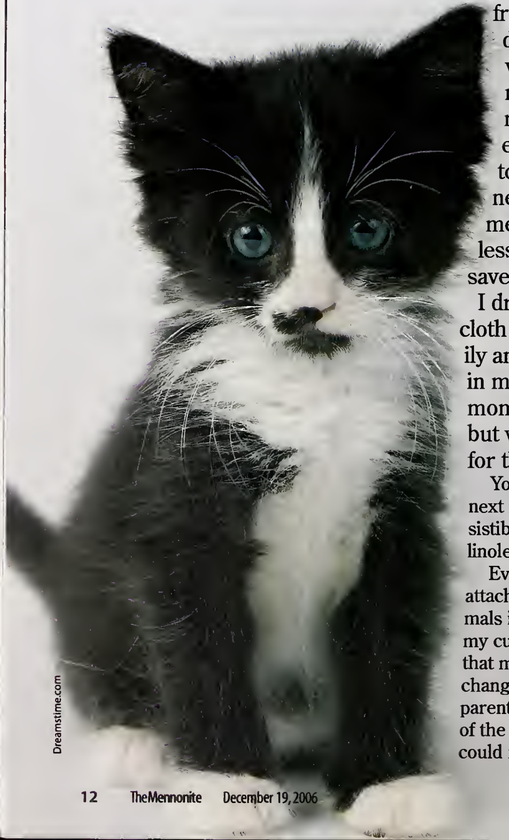
When I was a young girl, growing up on the farm, some laws were simply nonnegotiable. I had to practice piano, whether I wanted to or not. I could only watch TV when my homework was done. And under no circumstances were any kind of animals to be in the house. I was an animal lover and tried many methods to wear my parents down. My attempts at whining, bargaining and begging for a pet in the house fell on deaf ears. Their answer was always an unequivocal no.

One summer evening, there was a powerful thunderstorm. The wind beat against the house, and the rain came down in torrents. Thunder boomed, lightning flashed. We listened to the radio and were about to go to the basement when I heard a shrill wail from the steps outside our front door. I followed the sound and looked out into the dark night. There, sitting on our doorstep, was a kitten. It was barely alive, completely drenched from the pouring rain and mewing pitifully. It was barely weaned and no more than a couple of pounds at most. It was too weak even to hold its head up. I'm surprised it had the strength to make any sound at all. I ran to my mother with the news; surely there could be an exception to the commandment about no animals in the house. Upon seeing the helpless kitten, my mother relented, but only until the kitten was saved and the storm passed.

I dried off the kitten with a towel, held it and offered it a washcloth soaked in milk. The kitten sucked on the washcloth greedily and purred. It went to sleep, a fluffy ball of cuteness cradled in my arms. Meanwhile, the storm continued. I implored my mom not to send the kitten back out into the rain. She agreed but with the condition that the kitten must remain on the porch for the night and be put outside in the morning.

You can probably see where this story is going, and you're right. The next morning, the kitten was revived and ready to play, even more irresistible than before. The kitten gained entry into our kitchen—just the linoleum, my mother insisted, not the carpeted areas.

Eventually we named the kitten Nermal and became even more attached. Over the next couple of days, the non-negotiable law of "no animals in the house" was being worn down. I'd like to say it was because of my cunning negotiating skills or because I was such a well-behaved child that my parents wanted to reward me. But it was nothing I did that changed my parents' mindset. It was Nermal. He was just too cute, and my parents became attached in spite of themselves. Nermal now had free reign of the downstairs and even had his own special chair in the living room. I could not believe what had happened.



Dreamstime.com

and irresistible

I'd like to say that Nermal became our family pet and lived happily ever after, but the truth is, after he grew up he was much less cute and fluffy. That made it easier to have him stay outside, "Where he belongs," my parents said to save face.

During this Advent season, we have talked about God's unstoppable purpose. Throughout the history of God's people, God has worked out his purpose through us, partnering with us, even in spite of us. What is our part in this purpose? How will we respond to God's continual desire to reconcile us to himself—whatever it takes?

Although God's purpose is indeed unstoppable, I believe God did not want to barrel through like a bulldozer over 2000 years ago, trampling over anything in the way in order to bring us back to himself. Rather, God used something irresistible to reach us, to draw us in.

God came as a baby—a helpless, vulnerable, tiny creature that depended on others to live. Why didn't God choose to come as an adult, a grown man ready for ministry? Why did God take the form of something so pathetic? A baby is non-threatening, powerless, weak, feeble—all the adjectives we would not think of to describe an all-powerful Creator of the Universe.

There was God's wondrous gift of love and goodness and salvation, all wrapped up in swaddling cloths, lying in a feeding trough. This extraordinary gift depended on others to survive. God used irresistible means to accomplish his unstoppable purpose.

When babies are born, they have reflexes that are part of the natural growth process. Reflexes are automatic, not premeditated or even controllable. With the grasp reflex, stroking the palm of a baby's hand causes the baby to close his or her fingers in a grasp. I wonder how many times Mary or Joseph had the experience of the baby Jesus holding on to one of their fingers, not letting go, grasping tightly? Did they also feel God's hold on their hearts as this happened, knowing their Messiah was reaching out and grabbing on?

God continues to reveal himself in surprising ways we cannot refuse. I imagine this baby Jesus cried out for his parents' attention or reached up with his arms to be held. I expect this child also asked his parents to hold him and comfort him. God calls us, loves us and continues to reach out to us, even when we ignore God or are too busy.

Nermal found his way into our house that rainy night because we could not resist him. He was helpless, defenseless and would not survive without our care. I was excited about receiving this gift. My mother opposed the idea. My brothers and father were indifferent. The amazing thing is that each of us, all at different points, came to love Nermal in spite of ourselves. This irresistible creature found his way into each of our hearts.

The same thing happened over 2,000 years ago. Some were excited to receive this long-expected Messiah. Others were indifferent, and still others opposed this idea of their God revealing himself in such a crude, humble way.

We often picture God as a Heavenly Parent, caring for our needs, loving us, guiding us, teaching us. Today God comes to us a baby. How will we care for God? How will we receive this eternal gift of love and salvation? What will we do when we hear God crying out for our attention, reaching up with open arms to be held by us?

God has never stopped trying to reach us since the beginning of time.

God has never stopped trying to reach us since the beginning of time. I invite you to open your heart and respond to this irresistible gift of Love and Life. Perhaps you are eager to welcome Christ into your life. Possibly you've been turning away from Christ and are even turned off by the commercialism of Christmas; you've become hardened and cynical. Or maybe, if you're honest with yourself, you're feeling a bit indifferent about who Jesus is this Christmas season.

God will meet each of us wherever we are, in such a way that—if we allow ourselves—we will not be able to resist him. Today let us hold onto God, the Baby, the Christ Child, the irresistible gift that leads the way into God's heart.

Jen Helmuth Shenk attends Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind. This article is adapted from a sermon she preached there last Christmas.

The ‘living stones

by Timothy Seidel

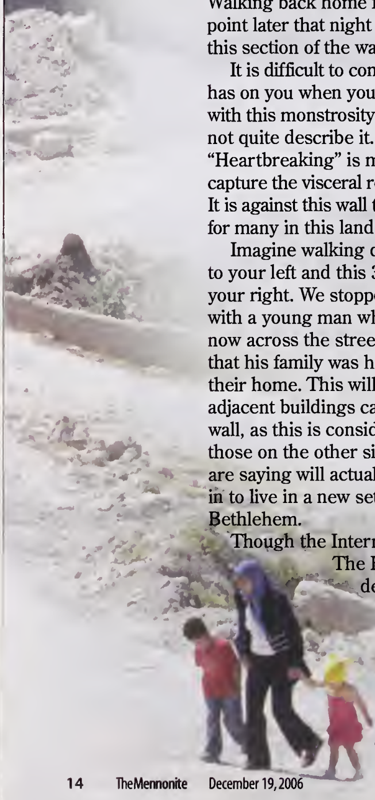
MCC photo by Christi Hoover Seidel

Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place.—Luke 2:15

Not too long ago, on my way into Jerusalem from where I live in Bethlehem, a six-mile distance, I noticed that the Israeli military had begun building another portion of the separation barrier in Bethlehem, right across the street from a hospital. Walking back home from the Bethlehem checkpoint later that night with some friends, I saw that this section of the wall was already finished.

It is difficult to communicate the impact this sight has on you when you enter Bethlehem, face-to-face with this monstrosity of concrete. "Disturbing" does not quite describe it. "Sad" also falls short. "Heartbreaking" is more appropriate, trying to capture the visceral responses to this visual trauma. It is against this wall that any semblance of optimism for many in this land has been shattered.

Imagine walking down a street, with a hospital to your left and this 30-foot-high concrete wall to your right. We stopped for a few minutes to talk with a young man who lives in one of the buildings now across the street from the wall. He mentioned that his family was hoping to add another story to their home. This will be impossible now because adjacent buildings cannot rise higher than the wall, as this is considered a "security threat" to those on the other side of the barrier, which many are saying will actually be Israeli settlers brought in to live in a new settlement right in the middle of Bethlehem.



Though the International Court of Justice in The Hague over two years ago condemned it as illegal, the "separation barrier," or "apartheid wall," as many Palestinians call it, continues to have a destructive impact on Palestinians. This 430-mile barrier—a network of concrete walls up to 30 feet high, electronically monitored, barbed-wire fences, patrol roads and trenches built not on the internationally recognized boundary referred to as the "Green Line" but on Palestinian land, cutting into the West Bank—often only separates Palestinian from Palestinian, cutting off many farmers from their land. Some are forced to watch their harvest rot on their trees, while others watch their trees uprooted to make way for the wall's path. In Bethlehem, the completed wall will make this community a virtual prison, with only three points of entry or exit. This adds more stress to an already devastated economic situation for Palestinians.

All too often, the portrayal in North America of this situation in Palestine/Israel does not speak to the experiences of Palestinians being walled into these "reservations."

All too often, the portrayal in North America of this situation in Palestine/Israel does not speak to the experiences of Palestinians being walled into these "reservations" or, evoking South Africa under apartheid, "Bantustans," as many have labeled these walled-off islands of land in the West Bank and Gaza.

How do these misrepresentations and misperceptions persist? One reason is distance. Keeping a safe and comfortable distance from people allows us the privilege of shaping them into whatever image we like, to suit whatever means we fancy.

This is why it is important for visitors to witness

# of Bethlehem

Misperceptions about Palestinians and Israel need to be cleared up.

the situation firsthand. Palestinians often ask us simply to listen to their stories, to hear voices too often silenced, and then to tell their stories to the rest of the world.

One misperception that persists is that peace is within reach only if—. In actuality, many Palestinians avoid the language of peace, which has become increasingly suspect due to how it has been used over the years to entrench and expand the Israeli domination over Palestinian life.

For example, throughout the Oslo process in the 1990s, while the world praised Israel for pursuing peace with Palestinians, there was a campaign of land expropriation and settlement expansion in the West Bank unrivaled in the history of this occupation. It doubled the number of Israeli settlers living in the West Bank. All of this under the guise of a "peace process."

Yet today the language of "peace" or "cease-fire" or "relative calm" tends to perpetuate the notion that things are getting better for Palestinians and Israelis, that walls are being broken down in the "Holy Land." Instead walls are being built, and Palestinian dispossession increases.

Israel's offensive into Gaza is another sad indicator of how bleak the situation is. Gaza is home to roughly 1.4 million Palestinians, and with a land area of just 220 square miles the Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated places in the world. The majority of Gazans live in refugee camps across the Gaza Strip. The past 15 years have seen limited economic access and opportunity due to Israeli closures. Today close to 80 percent of Gazans live below the poverty line.

In August 2005, Israel unilaterally "disengaged" from Gaza, evacuating its settler population as well as redeploying its military forces to its border. This ostensibly gave the Palestinian Authority total jurisdiction over Gaza. However, the reality is that Israel maintains complete control over the Gaza Strip, creating what one Israeli human rights organization calls "one big prison," leaving the state of Israel an occupying power over Gaza.

Since "Operation Summer Rains" began earlier this summer, after the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian militants, more than 300 Palestinians have been killed, leaving more than 5,000 injured, Gaza's children severely traumatized and half of Gaza's population without reliable electricity. With much of the water supply and sewage system dependent on electricity, this damage to civilian infrastructure raises serious medical concerns.

The portrayal of Palestinian Christians is another misperception that persists. Today in Palestine, Christianity is experiencing what many would consider a crisis. This is not due to the growth of so-called Islamic fundamentalism or the persecution of believers by their Muslim neighbors, misrepresentations used to distract from the realities of occupation. The plight of the Palestinian Christian is connected to that of the Palestinian Muslim in that both, whether in the Occupied Territories or inside Israeli, are experiencing daily injustices at the hands of oppressive, discriminatory policies imposed on them by the Israeli government.

Church leaders estimate that more than 2,000 Christians have emigrated from the Bethlehem area since September 2000, representing a decline of more than 9 percent of Bethlehem's total Christian population.

Palestinian Christians, like their Muslim brothers and sisters, have experienced a long history of dispossession and have not been immune to Israeli policies of occupation and discrimination. If anything, they have felt more strongly the feelings of forsakenness, knowing full well that many Christians in North America and Europe support without question the state of Israel in its oppression of their people. Daily experiences of humiliation at checkpoints, of land confiscation to make way for the separation barrier, the illegal occupation and colonization of Palestinian territory, unemployment, poverty and no sense of hope for a better future for their children have all contributed to the growing emigration of Palestinian Christians from the historical land of Palestine.

For the Palestinian Christians of Bethlehem, for

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example, traveling the six miles to Jerusalem's Old City is impossible without special permission. Roughly half of Bethlehem's residents are Christian. Church leaders estimate that more than 2,000 Christians have emigrated from the Bethlehem area since September 2000, representing a decline of more than 9 percent of Bethlehem's total Christian population.*

Alex Awad, Palestinian pastor of the East Jerusalem Baptist Church, reminds us that "Palestinian Christians have existed in the Holy Land since the day of Pentecost and have kept the torch of Christianity burning faithfully for the past 2,000 years." The erosion of Christianity in her birthplace, he observes, "is a loss for the body of Christ everywhere. Can we imagine the Holy Land devoid of the Christian presence and a church that has been a faithful witness for Christ since the day the church was born?"

Absent a viable, contiguous Palestinians state, what remains is a "reservation" life for Palestinians, parallel to the Native North American experience in the United States.

Palestinian livelihoods are devastated by military occupation, and their experience of dispossession continues unabated. More land is expropriated for the construction of the separation barrier; illegal settlements, including ones in and around Jerusalem, continue to grow; a closure system of checkpoints and roadblocks that obstruct mobility, proliferates, and homes are demolished.

It appears the separation barrier will become the de facto border of a Palestinian quasi-state composed of several isolated islands of land on roughly 40 to 50 percent of the West Bank. Palestinians will be confined to these Bantustans, which will be partially connected by a network of tunnels controlled by the Israeli military. Industrial zones may then be established at the edges of these areas so that businesses can take advantage of a cheap, imprisoned labor pool. Israel's declaration earlier this year unilaterally to set these borders in a larger plan to solidify control over the West Bank only reaffirms this sad reality and destroys any hope for a two-state solution to this terrible conflict. Absent a viable, contiguous Palestinians state, what remains is a "reservation" life for Palestinians, parallel to the Native North American experience in the United States. Not an optimistic future.

Two years ago, MCC's Washington Office launched an advocacy campaign called "Bridges Not Walls" (www.mcc.org/us/bridges) that urged Mennonites and other people of faith across the United States to take action and advocate on behalf of those experiencing hardship, limited mobility and access, and continuing dispossession as a result of this wall. The campaign took as its focus the words of the Apostle Paul to the Church at Ephesus: "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Ephesians 2:14).

Such displays of solidarity are especially meaningful during Advent. It is in this spirit that Mennonite Church USA has launched a new advocacy campaign for Advent that looks at Bethlehem "Then and Now," offering educational and advocacy materials for children and adults. [Learn more at peace.mennolink.org/resources/advent06/.]

Pilgrimage has brought many people over the years to the "Holy Land," including Bethlehem. And though pilgrimage can make us feel closer to our faith story, to truly find an opportunity for engagement and transformation, to truly encounter God today in the suffering of this land, one must see the "living stones," the living communities who hope for a peace born of justice and who seek to tell their stories, to be heard and to have their stories told to the rest of the world.

May the voices of our Palestinian sisters and brothers that are so often dismissed, silenced and dehumanized speak loudly to us this Advent season. I encourage everyone to close the distance and come to this "little town" of Bethlehem, the place where we claim the incarnational presence of "God with us" was first made known to humanity, to see what is happening for yourselves.

*For more on these conditions in Bethlehem, visit www.openbethlehem.org/ and see the report from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Peace Process in the Middle East, "Costs of Conflict: The Changing Face of Bethlehem" (December 2004) at www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2004/ocha-opt-20dec.pdf.

Timothy Seidel is a peace development worker with Mennonite Central Committee in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, where he has lived for the past 2½ years.

Advent couplets

by Diane Tucker

People are coming for dinner; lay the table
with freshly pressed green and yellow napkins.

On short dark days she draws impatience tight
around herself, black swaddling clothes.

By noon the page is half full of words.
By two the clock has eaten every one.

All day the stove has been dreaming of stew;
meat, roots, leaves, it performs their marriage.

The gardeners are gathering the fallen leaves
into canvasses to take them all away.

First Sunday of four. Hold your breath
for four weeks in the dark, then exhale a song.

Diane Tucker lives in Burnaby, B.C.

Christmas couplets

by Diane Tucker

We are dumb animals, oxen chewing, cows
breathing steam in the litter. Greasy sheep.

We walk winter, nearly spent in the leafless dark,
waiting for some thrust, some flare of life in the belly.

The signs, wonders, angels hovering over stars
are not the gift; the gift is by birth and blood.

A woman and a miracle wrapped tight together:
God bundled in a girl, shepherd in the sheep's womb.

There's dung in the stable, flies and rotting hay,
but a pearl is hidden there, sleeping where animals feed.

When the world opens its greedy red velvet mouth,
shut it with singing, with the base and the exalted flesh.

Diane Tucker lives in Burnaby, B.C.

The seduction of certainty

James Schrag is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

If I were a pianist, I would like to sit at a position at the keyboard where I could reach all the keys. Church leaders like me find a "leadership position" where the broadest reach can be attained. Both leaders and followers need to confront the seductive temptation of a narrow certainty. You can often detect this temptation at play when you hear the conjunction "or" in a sentence that contrasts two choices. Some of these temptations are easy to resist—for example, if I am asked if I am a husband or a father, I answer "both" because I know the "or" in the sentence must be replaced by "and."

The seduction of certainty is stronger in questions of habits, values, beliefs and convictions. Is the church to practice evangelism or peacemaking? I resist the temptation to certainty by answering "both." It is possible to have the right answers to the wrong questions and thereby increase the confusion. "How are we doing at the balance of evangelism and peacemaking?" may be one way of asking the right question.

Finding the right answers to the wrong questions can weaken our defenses to the temptation of a narrow certainty, which in turn can result in pride that weakens our witness.

The temptation to certainty may be endemic to our natures. It is partly responsible for our church's schismatic history. This may be influenced by culture. On a two-week tour of Anabaptist sites in Europe last summer, John Ruth, our tour leader, reminded us that the Swiss have often displayed a stubborn trait of certainty. Thus the persecution of Anabaptists was the most severe and long-lasting in Switzerland. I am Swiss by linage, so I asked myself, "Is that the way I am? Am I given to certainties that resist new light—even what comes from God? There is still a large proportion of Swiss like me among the members of Mennonite Church USA.

Christ often practiced the both-and. He associated with both Pharisees and publicans. He said he came to complete the law and the prophets, not to replace them. He invited the woman caught in adultery to both confession and forgiveness.

I have learned not to be too friendly to questions that have "or" in them. They are often the wrong questions. "Should we be Anabaptist or missional?" is the wrong question. Likewise, asking if we are called to separate from the world or engage it will lead to a confused response to God's call. Are we to practice mutual aid or address the needs of a hungry and starving world? You get the picture.

Moreover, prophecy has a long tradition of asking either-or questions, often voiced by someone on the fringes of the spectrum of possible answers. The most needed kind of prophesy today will emphasize the both-and aspects of truth. Why? Because Christians need each other more than ever for effective witness under the pressures of a relentless secularization all around us. With the influence of 21st-century globalization, we need to develop an openness to hear God speaking to North American Anabaptists from a new source—the church of the global South. We are also engaged in mending breaches in relationships that were caused by the ruptures of the Reformation almost 500 years ago. We ought to seek out other Christians for new relationships, as we have done recently in embryonic exchanges with a certain group of Pentecostals who hope we can help them regain a lost peace witness, and from whom we hope to learn more about spirit-led missional engagement.

In 1995, our predecessor churches adopted both our current vision statement and our Confession of faith in a Mennonite Perspective, plus a statement on Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love. Each part of this trilogy depends upon the other parts. Only asking, What does the confession say? or only, What does the agreeing and disagreeing statement say? may be asking the wrong questions. Finding the right answers to the wrong questions can weaken our defenses to the temptation of a narrow certainty, which in turn can result in pride that weakens our witness. May God grant us a breadth of understanding that communicates the fullness of God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Faithfulness and patriotism in a time of war** —Keith Graber Miller
- **The two-kingdom politics of Jesus**—Levi Miller

Photo supplied

Margaret Whigham (left) and Sharon Williams (center) of Nueva Vida Norristown New Life congregation and Bobby Wibowo (right) of Philadelphia Praise Center lead worship at Franconia Conference's fall assembly.

Franconia Conference adds church

Risks 'protocols and precedents' to take in Philadelphia congregation

Anna Musselman, minister of church programs at Salford Mennonite Church, told her congregation that the walls of their historic meetinghouse would hear new songs and sounds during the Franconia Mennonite Conference fall assembly, held at the church near Harleysville, Pa., on Nov. 10-11. Musselman was right. Praises rang out for 24 hours with words in Indonesian, Spanish and Vietnamese while leaders gathered to celebrate, discern and learn.

The assembly worship was led by a multiethnic, multilingual team composed of members of Nueva Vida Norristown (Pa.) New Life, a multicultural, bilingual congregation and Philadelphia Praise Center (PPC), a congregation composed mostly of recent immigrants from Indonesia. The theme was "Centered in Christ, Empowering Others." Conference delegates and guests gathered from as far away as Chile to celebrate connections that cross lines of ethnicity, language and denominational differences.

The assembly included affirmation of PPC as the conference's newest member congregation. In the litany read by conference leaders, they said together: "In the spirit of God's biblical mandate to protect the vulnerable … we acted on behalf of Franconia Mennonite Conference, risking protocols and precedents to use our 300-year-old residency in this land to … provide leadership for a fledgling congregation in Philadelphia."

The conference board acted in June to accept PPC as a member in order to secure pastoral leaders for the rapidly growing congregation. Normal protocol requires action by the entire conference at its November meeting, but the board took this unprecedented action to facilitate immigration processes for pastoral leadership.

While worship and discernment are traditional features of the conference's gathering, this year "equipping" seminars included opportunities to hear from denominational leaders Jim Schrag and Stanley Green.

The conference ended with affirmation of simple and nonresistant faith—this time read in Indonesian, Spanish and Vietnamese as well as English.—*Steve Kriss of Franconia Conference*

Actuarial Student

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) has an opening for an actuarial student to assist with various actuarial functions such as conducting experience studies, developing premiums, and calculating reserves. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree in math, business, finance, or a related field; ability to solve mathematical and analytical problems and use computer resources effectively; and self-motivation to study actuarial syllabus materials.

MMA, a stewardship solutions organization affiliated with Anabaptist denominations, provides insurance and financial services. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. Send resume and cover letter to:

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Documentary tackles housing issues

Sources say that one third of Americans now find housing 'unaffordable.'

"If you want a religious experience, try living in a station wagon with your 12-year-old son," says Carol Murphy, Alexandria, Va., of her experience being homeless. A new documentary tackling the U.S. affordable-housing crisis was slated to be offered to television stations affiliated with NBC-TV beginning Dec. 10. The hour-long program includes interviews with Jim Wallis of Sojourners/Call to Renewal; Jonathan Reckford, CEO for Habitat for Humanity International; Mennonite Disaster Service workers Wilmer Leichty and Gordon Matties, and Drew Hensley of Mennonite Mission Network's DOOR program.

Titled "Building on Faith: Making Poverty Housing History," the documentary looks at how providing a safe and secure home is a basic necessity for building a just and functional society. The documentary also includes cameo appearances by former vice presidential candidates John Edwards and Jack Kemp. Edwards served one term as a U.S. senator from North Carolina and Kemp as U.S. secretary of housing and urban development and U.S. congressman from New York. Narrator for the broadcast is journalist, author and award-winning television producer Linda Ellerbee.

Sources interviewed for the documentary say that one-third of Americans now spend at least 30 percent of their income on housing, which is officially "unaffordable," according to U.S. federal guidelines.

Producer for the program is Burton Buller, director of Mennonite Media.—*Melodie Davis of Mennonite Mission Network*

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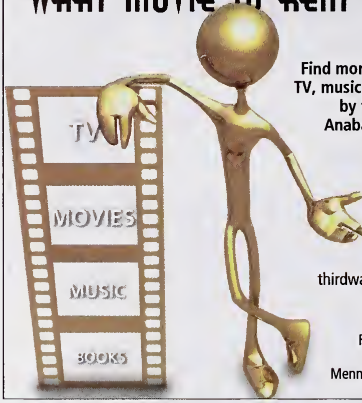

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Commentary writers face challenges

20 commentaries in 20 years; editors hope to complete series by 2020

Nineteen scholars met Nov. 17 at a workshop for people writing commentaries in the Believers Church Bible Commentary (BCBC) series. Meeting in conjunction with the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in Washington, the workshop brought together those who had already written commentaries published in the series with those who are working on upcoming volumes.

The BCBC series originated when a Bible commentary series in Papua, New Guinea, caused Mennonite publisher Ben Cutrell to ask, Might the Mennonites in North America do something similar? Since then, Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA, Church of the Brethren, Brethren in Christ and Brethren Church have partnered to develop a commentary series that asks writers to represent the best of current scholarship while writing primarily for the church. The series is written for Sunday school teachers, pastors and others who teach in the congregation. An editorial council of scholars representing each of these church groups meets annually.

The workshop featured the personal experiences of commentary writers—how they went about the process of research, writing and rewriting. Several reflected on the challenge of finding the right balance between technical or historical-critical background and contemporary appropriation in ways that communicate in a compelling way. Another challenge writers have faced is being relevant without writing things that become quickly dated. A third challenge has been finding the right balance between how the text has functioned in the life of the church and how it might function in the life of the church.

There have been 20 commentaries published in the last 20 years. The editorial council hopes to complete the series by 2020.—*Loren Johns*

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Moderators, secretaries visit Louisiana

More than 5,000 have volunteered through Mennonite Disaster Service.

Leaders of five Anabaptist denominations visited Louisiana Nov. 29-Dec. 2 to learn about the ongoing struggles of communities affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita and encourage the work of churches and aid organizations in the Gulf Coast region. The nine-member Council of Moderators and Secretaries visited New Orleans neighborhoods, worshiped with an Anabaptist congregation in Metairie and attended the dedication of a house built by Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) in the southern Louisiana community of Pointe-aux-Chenes. They also met with pastors and aid workers and learned about the enormous challenges still facing Gulf Coast communities as a result of the 2005 hurricanes.

Hundreds of thousands of people who evacuated from New Orleans and other areas have not returned. In many cases, they continue to live in trailers or other temporary housing arrangements in unfamiliar communities far from their family members, churches and jobs. Delays in restoring city services have slowed the return of evacuees, according to Tim Barr, Gulf Coast disaster response coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee. Many evacuees lack the basic resources they need to make the transition home.

"The hope is that a lot of people are going to come back to New Orleans, but the reality is that many people can't," Barr says.

Since the hurricanes, MDS has brought more than 5,000 volunteers from the United States and Canada to clean up and repair homes.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

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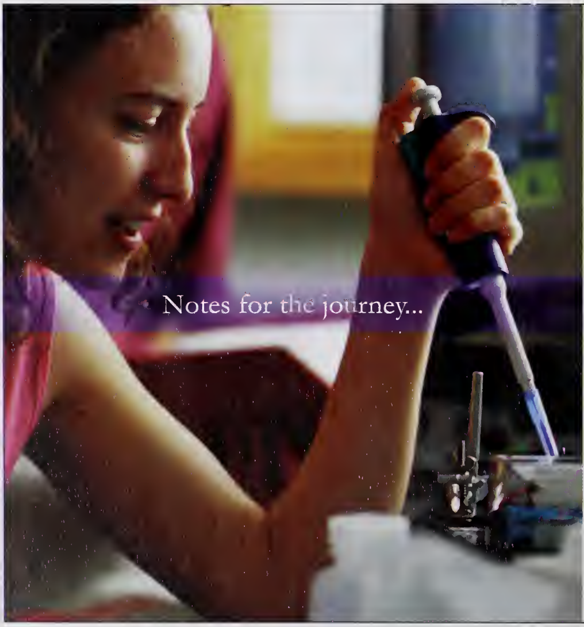
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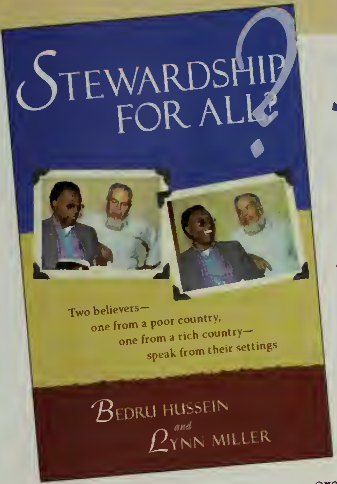
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The Global Anabaptist/ Mennonite Shelf of Literature envisions a new book selection each year, encouraging the fellowships around the world to translate it into their own languages. The book or booklet of the year may have been published first in any one of the languages spoken within the Anabaptist-related fellowships found in 75 countries around the world. For more information, email General Secretary Larry Miller at LarryMiller@MWC-cmm.org.

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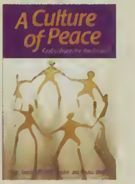

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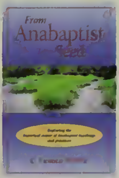

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WORKERS

Brown, Lena Horning, ended her term as associate pastor at Slate Hill Mennonite Church, Harrisburg, Pa., on Oct. 1.

Custis, Thurman, was licensed as youth pastor at Capital Christian Fellowship, Lanham, Md., on Oct. 8.

Gibbs, Stephen H., was installed as lead pastor at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., on Oct. 11.

Good, J. Stephen, was ordained as deacon at Strasburg Mennonite Church, Strasburg, Pa., on Oct. 8.

Horst, Clifford R., was ordained as deacon at Strasburg Mennonite Church, Strasburg, Pa., on Oct. 8.

Kanagy, Robert L., was ordained as lead pastor at Masonville Mennonite Church, Washington Boro, Pa., on Nov. 5.

Kurtz, Marilyn E., was licensed as lead pastor at Rossmere Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Oct. 29.

Mamo, Mesfin, ended a term as pastor at Emmanuel Worship Center, New York City, N.Y., on Aug. 23.

Martin, Larry L., was licensed as associate pastor at Green Terrace Mennonite Church, Wernersville, Pa., on Sept. 24.

Meador, James B., ended his term as lead pastor at Willow Street Mennonite Church, Willow Street, Pa., on Oct. 15.

Melendez, Fredy, was licensed as associate pastor at Prince of Peace Mennonite Church, Reading, Pa., on Nov. 5.

Ramer, Steve, was licensed and installed as pastor of Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship, Fort Collins, Colo., on Oct. 29.

Rissler, James, was installed as pastor of Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, Atlanta, Ga., on Oct. 22.

Schlabach, Tina Stoltzfus, was ordained as pastor at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Nov. 19.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bailey, Bryce Andrew, Oct. 31, to Jace and Kendra Conrad Bailey, Riverside, Iowa.

Bailey, Jackson Thomas, Aug. 22, to Josh and Barbara Bailey, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Birky, Raquel Lynn, Nov. 18, to Jesse and Erin Clark Birky, Delavan, Ill.

Bixler, Josiah Aden, Sept. 5, to Mark and Jennifer Troyer Bixler, Dalton, Ohio.

Bontrager, Cole Michael, Aug. 13, to Lyle and Erin Bontrager, LaGrange, Ind.

Braun, Crosby Daniel, Nov. 2, to Tim and Betsy Poling Braun, Goshen, Ind.

Chupp, Jada Elise, April 9, 2002, received for adoption Nov. 16, by Joe and Betty Sue Mullet Chupp, Dundee, Ohio.

Chupp, Maleah Grace, Aug. 29, 2005, received for adoption Nov. 16, by Joe and Betty Sue Mullet Chupp, Dundee, Ohio.

Chupp, Tristin Michael, Sept. 1, 2003, received for adoption Nov. 16, by Joe and Betty Sue Mullet Chupp, Dundee, Ohio.

Cornies, Kara Eden Viola, Nov. 14, to Ron and Karen Cornies, Kitchener, Ont.

Eberly, Levi Michael Nissley, Sept. 27, to Matt Eberly and Kathy Nissley, Madison, Wis.

Hendon, Nathan Thomas, Nov. 9, to Bill and Kendra Good Hendon, Mishawaka, Ind.

Kratz, Brayden Roger, Nov. 22, to Erik and Sarah Troyer Kratz, Harrisonburg, Va.

Kratzer, Abagail Amanda, Oct. 13, to Amos and Amy Chupp Kratzer, Goshen, Ind.

McDowell, Avery Rose, Nov. 17, to Scott and Becci Zook McDowell, Elkhart, Ind.

McHugh, Ian James Stoltzfus, May 25, to Mike and Heidi Stoltzfus McHugh, Goshen, Ind.

Michaels, Noah John, Sept. 6, to John and Christi Ullinger Michaels, Orrville, Ohio.

Moyer, Micayla Elena, Sept. 29, to Shawn and Cynthia Perez Moyer, Lancaster, Pa.

Nafziger, Ava Grace, Nov. 4, to Alan and Audry Rohn Nafziger, Santa Barbara, Calif.

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Ours, Seth Benjamin, Oct. 31, to Jeremy and Sheila Bender Ours, Kalona, Iowa.

Ragland, Landin Bradley, Nov. 25, to Brad and Lisa Ragland, Hopedale, Ill.

Sawatzky, Asher Roth, Sept. 30, to David and Rachel Roth Sawatzky, Atlanta, Ga.

Schrock, Lydia Monica, Oct.21, to Rodney and Lisa Germeister Schrock, Hartville, Ohio.

Schwabe, Zachary Earl, Nov. 21, to Robert and Suzanne Beyer Schwabe, Morrisville, Pa.

Shrock, Braeden Jay, Nov. 3, to Shannon and Rebekah Ligas Shrock, Uniontown, Ohio.

Sieren, Milo Ralph, Aug. 7, to Ed and Valerie Andre Sieren, Thornburg, Iowa.

Sommers, Luke Hayden, Nov. 9, to Gary and Charla Steiner Sommers, Canton, Ohio.

Strycker, Trinity Rose, Oct. 22, to Tim and Amy Strycker, Goshen, Ind.

Stutzman, Chance Russell, Sept. 18, to Boe and Holly Amen Stutzman, Beaver Crossing, Neb.

Toews, Celina Marie, Nov. 24, to Lyndon and Heidi Friesen Toews, Altona, Man.

Weaver, Mikayla Rose, Nov. 1, to Daniel and Kristle Whitman Weaver, Canton, Ohio.

Yoder, Brecken Douglas, July 30, to D.J. and Karlette Troyer Yoder, Milford, Neb.

Zacharias, Logan Jack, Nov. 24, to Sheldon and Andrea Penner Zacharias, Altona, Man.

MARRIAGES

Brant/Thomas: Jonathan Brant, Salisbury, Pa., and Heather Thomas, Salisbury, Oct. 28 at Springs Mennonite Church, Springs, Pa.

Brownstein/Butti: Erin Brownstein, Crafton, Pa., and Michael Butti, Scottdale, Pa., Nov. 18 at Springwood Conference Center, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Eby/Weller: Arvin Eby, Waynesboro, Pa., and Linette Weller, Greencastle, Pa., Oct. 5 at Hebron Mennonite Church, Hagerstown, Md.

Friesen/Penner: Kyle Friesen, Altona, Manitoba, and Melissa Penner, Altona, Nov. 18 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Hershberger/Yoder: Dan Hershberger, Berlin, Ohio, and Nicole Yoder, Middlebury, Ind., Oct. 21 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Houser/Roes: Bonnie Houser, Glenfield, N.Y., and Dustin Roes, Lowville, N.Y., Sept. 23 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Miller/Ramsburg: Justin Miller, Hartville, Ohio, and Morgan Ramsburg, Uniontown, Ohio, Nov. 18 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Vanderveer/Williams: Marcy Vanderveer, Goshen, Ind., and Jason Williams, Indianapolis, Aug. 5 at St. Luke's Methodist Church, Indianapolis.

DEATHS

Albrecht, Betty Ann King, 80, Pigeon, Mich., died Oct. 25 following a brief illness. Spouse: John M. Albrecht. Parents: Edward and Elizabeth Augsburger King. Children: Linda Christophel, Suzane Gascho, John, Kevin; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Pigeon River Church

Christenson, Shirley Aeschliman, 69, Wauseon, Ohio, died Nov. 22. Spouse: William Christenson (deceased). Parents: Omar and Viola Sauder Aeschliman. Child: Roger; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Clemens, Edgar M., 80, New Holland, Pa., died Sept. 3. Spouse: Rhoda Hostetter Clemens. Parents: Raymond and Esther Moyer Clemens. Children: Fredric, Rosa Hines, Jonathan, Darlis, Marcia Ludwig, Conrad, Andrea Zuercher; 19 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at New Holland Mennonite Church.

Dutcher, Frank, 82, Hartville, Ohio, died Oct. 10 of cancer. Spouse: Gertrude Maust Dutcher. Children: Jonathan, Ruth Massey, Dan, Naomi Leaman, Titus; 17 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

Erb, D. Wilbur, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., died Nov. 6. Spouse: Lois Taylor Erb (deceased). Parents: David Miller Erb and Minnie Witmer Erb. Children: David T., James E., Paul S. Philip R., Joyce E. Brunk, Merle C. Mast, Constance E. Madden; 12 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11 at Steelton Mennonite Church, Steelton, Pa.

Gingerich, Lowell K., 49, Riverside, Iowa, died Oct. 7 from complication following a bone marrow transplant. Spouse: Delores Gingerich. Parents: Duane and Marilyn Small Gingerich. Children: Jeremiah, Lynette Gingerich Poll, Zachary, Victor, Harlan; one grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 10 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Good, Emory, 79, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 21. Spouse: Thelma Blosser Good. Parents: E. Paul and Eula Knicely Good. Children: Joyce Burkholder, Donald L., Ray L.; six grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Landis, Curtis Alderfer, 84, Lansdale, Pa., died Nov. 9 of Parkinson's disease. Spouse: Betty Mae Hackman Landis. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Dock Woods Community Chapel, Lansdale.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

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Miller, Martha Miller, 82, Dundee, Ohio, died Nov. 8 of cancer. Spouse: John Y. Miller. Parents: Andrew and Saloma Yoder Miller. Children: Marilyn Bresson, Lori Budd, Irene Troyer, Bob; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Dundee.

Schrock, L. Allen, 85, Springs, Pa., died Nov. 8. Spouse: Bernice Kolb Schrock. Parents: Alvin and Amelia Miller Schrock. Children: Randy, Margie Short; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Nov. 11 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Stalter, Earl J., 90, Middlebury, Ind., died Nov. 9. Spouse: LeAnna Miller Stalter (deceased). Parents: John D. and Ida Yoder Stalter. Children: Virginia Lee Kramer, Darlene Fay Kujawski, Richard E. J., Dennis Ray; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Swartz, Katie Knepp, 90, Glendale, Ariz., died Oct. 5. Spouse: Roy Swartz (deceased). Parents: Noah and Mattie Jantzi Knepp. Children: Ron, Marilyn Joyce Miller, Dale, Dewaine; 13 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 10 at Glencroft Chapel, Glendale.

Yoder, Katherine E. Anders, 55, LaGrange, Ind., died May 28 of cancer. Spouse: Dennis D. Yoder. Parents: Charles and Shirley Bammel Anders. Children: Laura Yoder, Rob, Mark; four grandchildren. Funeral: July 31 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Yoder, Mose, 88, Uniontown, Ohio, died Nov. 5. Spouse: Rosie Yoder. Parents: John P. and Katie Slabaugh Yoder. Children: Martin, Titus, Jan, Royce, Cindy Edwards; 14 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 9 at Hartville Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio.

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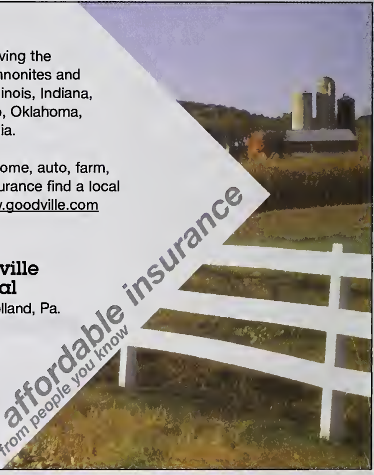

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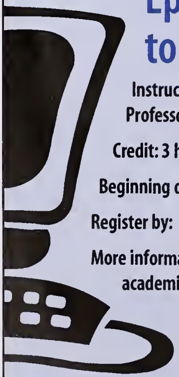

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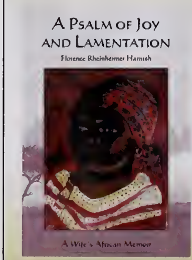

Letters and Stories from Three Years in Tanzania

Florence Rheinheimer Harnish writes about living in Tanzania under the MCC-TAP program in the late 1960s. Told from the perspective of a doctor's wife, her stories describe rearing three children in a rural village, safaris through washed-out roads, poisonous snake encounters, and most of all, her relationship to the Tanzanian women.

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Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for two key positions: ***high school teacher—U.S. history and government***—beginning in Fall 2007 and ***director of development***: This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. Candidates should be available to begin employment between January and July 2007. Successful candidates will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment. Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net. Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

Program director: **Camp Hebron** is seeking an experienced program professional to lead a vibrant and challenging program ministry. This is a full-time position, with benefits. The successful candidate will be a strong spiritual leader and motivator with highly effective interpersonal and programming skills. The program director recruits, trains and supervises a summer staff of 65 as well as five year-round staff. A deep understanding of Christian belief from an Anabaptist perspective is preferred. Skills and experience in program marketing are also preferred. Interested candidates may send questions or resumés to Lanny Millette, Executive Director at millette@camphebron.org. To learn more about the camp see www.camphebron.org.

Valleyview Mennonite Church is located in the city of London (pop. 348,000), Ontario., in Middlesex County. We are presently looking for a ***full-time pastor*** and are inviting people to apply for this position. Interested candidates are asked to submit their resumé to the MCEC office at 4489 King St. East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2. Attention: Muriel Bechtel.

Lithuania Christian College (LCC) is seeking an ***academic administrative assistant*** that will prepare for and follow-up with president's cabinet and department chairs meetings, track strategic planning action plan items for monthly updates, collect and maintain institutional policies, coordinate various academic and institutional events including board meetings and graduation, and provide other support for the vice president of academics. Please visit our Web site at www.lcc.lt/opportunities for instructions on how to apply or email us at opportunities@lcc.lt.

Conrad Grebel University College, a Mennonite residence and teaching facility affiliated with the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario., Canada, seeks a married couple for the position of ***senior residents***, beginning approximately June 1, 2007. The role involves living in an apartment in the college's residence building and supervising the college during nonbusiness hours. Rent and utilities are free in exchange for performance of duties. Applicants should be mature, responsible and able to relate to a broad range of people, especially students in residence. If interested contact E. Paul Penner, CGUC Operations Manager, at 519-885-0220 x24231 or eppenner@uwaterloo.ca. Application deadline is Jan. 15, 2007.

Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis Mich., is seeking a person to serve as ***assistant*** to the outdoor learning director and program director. This position is a voluntary service position with small stipend, housing and insurance available. Applicant needs organizational and leadership skills to help with activities and programs. Contact Justin Weaver for more information: 269-476-9744, Justin@friedenswald.org.

Couple needed for ***full-time ministry***: Sharing responsibility for part-time positions of food service, hosting, maintenance and housekeeping. Offering hospitality to the brothers and sisters of New York City at **Camp Deerpark**; Westbrookville, N.Y. Two- to three-year commitment desired. Requirement: deep commitment to Christ and his body through loving and sacrificial service. Email admin@campdeerpark.org, 845-754-8669.

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Goshen College Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning positions. With a five-year grant from the Lilly Foundation, Goshen College is opening a new center to research dynamics of the changing ethnic composition in our area and its implications for higher education, increase college accessibility for Latino and other students and transform the learning community for all students. We are searching for candidates to fill the following positions, with start dates in early 2007. To apply for a position, please see the specific job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Goshen College seeks ***project director*** to develop Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning under five-year grant to increase college accessibility for Latino and other students, transform the learning community for all students, and research dynamics of the changing ethnic composition in our area and its implications for higher education. Ph.D. or Ed.D. required, plus higher education teaching and administration experience expected. To apply, see the job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Goshen College seeks ***director of curriculum, teaching and faculty development*** to lead activities of five-year grant that foster curriculum/pedagogy initiatives across the curriculum with emphasis on expanding intercultural learning. Oversee general education and collegiate studies program, supervise registrar and provide faculty development to enhance cross-cultural learning. Ph.D. or Ed.D. and at least four to five years experience in higher education teaching, curriculum and faculty development, and strong administrative skills required. To apply, see the job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Goshen College seeks ***enrollment counselor*** to serve as a member of the enrollment team with primary responsibility for increasing accessibility of the college's education to Latino and other culturally diverse groups of students. As part of a five-year grant, will serve as single point of contact for prospective students and families, build relationships with community leaders in the region and be financial aid resource person for prospective and enrolled students. Master's degree preferred, bachelor required. Must be bilingual in Spanish and English. To apply, see the job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Goshen College seeks ***research director*** to lead grant-funded Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning in researching dynamics of changing ethnic composition in our area and its implications for higher education. Oversee work of visiting scholars, resident and student researchers, disseminate findings, organize on-campus discussions and work with national organizations. Ph.D. or Ed.D. required. Research and refereed publication required along with administrative experience expected. To apply, see the job posting at www.goshen.edu/employment.

Columbia Bible College's Board of Directors is launching its search for Columbia's next ***president***. Columbia is an accredited four-year evangelical Anabaptist Bible College on Canada's West Coast with about 500 students. The president's role exists in order to lead the Columbia team in the fulfillment of its mission, to prepare people for a life of discipleship, service and ministry. For a full list of qualifications and a job description, please consult our Web site: www.columbiabc.edu. Please forward resumé by Dec. 31, 2006, to Brian Friesen, Board Chair, Columbia Bible College, 2940 Clearbrook Road, Abbotsford, BC V2T 2Z8, boardchair@columbiabc.edu. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed first to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

Quakertown Christian School needs the following:

Administrator for preschool-grade 8 school; responsible for the overall operation of the ministry. Candidates should have five years K-8 teaching experience; master's degree; Pennsylvania administrative certification or willingness to pursue certification.

Director of development to serve as member of administrative team and be responsible for providing overall leadership in all areas of fund-raising and public relations. Send or email resumé to Patricia A. Roberts, Quakertown Christian School, 50 East Paletown Road, Quakertown, PA 18951; paroberts@quakertownchristian.org.

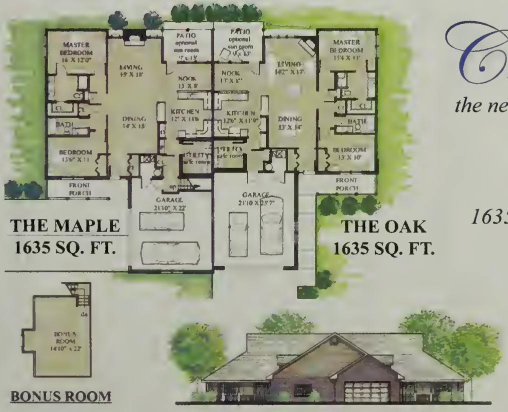
Colorado congregation seeks ***full-time transition pastor*** for one-year period (would consider ¾-time), beginning April 2007. **Mountain Community Mennonite Church** is located 20 miles north of Colorado Springs and is part of the Mountain States Mennonite Conference. Contact Marc Yoder at 719-481-1898 or email m.yoder@adelphia.net.

Goshen College seeks applicants or nominations for a full-time, tenure track ***economics professor*** to begin in August 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Goshen College seeks applicants or nominations for a full-time, tenure track ***business professor*** to begin in August 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.



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Books to help us understand peace

Gordon Houser

Tis the season to celebrate the birth of Jesus, who came to bring "peace on earth." And 'tis the season to read books that help us understand the peace Jesus lived and taught. The following may help us in that task.

Two excellent books—both by writers outside the Mennonite fold—that address pacifism are *What About Hitler? Wrestling with Jesus' Call to Nonviolence in an Evil World* by Robert W. Brimlow (Brazos Press, 2006, $19.99) and *Blessed Are the Pacifists: The Beatitudes and Just War Theory* by Thomas Trzyna (Herald Press, 2006, $11.99). While both authors offer critiques of just war theory and call readers to follow the teaching of Jesus, each comes at pacifism differently.

Brimlow, a philosopher, presents a more thorough discussion of just war, proving it untenable. He covers its history and addresses contemporary exponents, such as Michael Walzer and Jean Bethke Elshtain, who critique pacifism as ineffective or even immoral. He is respectful yet clear in his opposition to their arguments.

Brimlow also uses candid meditations on Scripture and personal stories to show that "our call to follow Christ … is unrealistic, implausible and absurd." The Christian response to "the Hitler question," he writes, is not easy: "We must live faithfully; we must be humble in our faith and truthful in what we say and do; we must repay evil with good; and we must be peacemakers. This may also mean as a result that the evildoers will kill us. Then we shall also die."

That response, we recognize, comes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which is the focus of Trzyna's book. He also shows that just war theory is inconsistent and not a good public instrument for making wise choices. He draws on Scripture, other religious traditions and literature, from *Gilgamesh* to the Grail story, to show that "it is war and violence that are the aberrations, not peace."

Trzyna's approach is more pragmatic than Brimlow's and perhaps more accessible, though I found the latter more powerful. Trzyna writes that "pacifism is practical in the end because it is the only approach to violence that can succeed in the long run." And "only pacifism is fully consistent with the central teachings of the Christian faith."

Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics by Willard M. Swartley (Eerdmans, 2006, $34) is an important new work. Swartley shows that peace is a dominant theme in Scripture yet has been largely overlooked in theology and ethics. He examines the related themes of the reign of God, gospel and peace in Jesus' life and teaching. He looks at the entire New Testament and relates peace—including love of enemies and reconciliation—to such theological themes of salvation, Christology and the reign of God. Finally, Swartley considers specific practices that lead to peacemaking.

While this 500-page book will be too academic for many readers, pastors and other teachers should find treasures to use in sermons or classes.

Gandhi and Beyond: Nonviolence for an Age of Terrorism by David Cortright (Paradigm Publishers, 2006, $24.95) traces the history of nonviolent social activism, from Gandhi to Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez. He sees nonviolence as a philosophy of life that does not negate the importance of effectiveness, even in this age of terrorism. Thoroughly researched, this book will especially appeal to those committed to nonviolent action.

FILMS

Fast Food Nation (R) is a feature film based on Eric Schlosser's best-selling investigation of the industrial food chain. It draws together three different story lines to make the point that we live in a fast food nation, enslaved to habits that are poisonous not only to our physical bodies but to our body politic. The film is not primarily about animal rights or healthy food but about a populace that lets itself be controlled by corporate greed.

The Nativity Story (PG) tells an intimate story of Joseph and Mary, Jews in a poor village who are caught in the political machinations of Herod, a ruthless Jewish king and a puppet of Rome. The acting and photography are good, and it helps us understand that these were real people. But it ends with an iconic presentation of the Holy Family with the shepherds and the Magi. This draws on traditional, not biblical, sources. The film will appeal to many Christians.

The U.S. vs. John Lennon (PG-13) is about the famous Beatle and his wife, Yoko Ono, and their artistic activities in support of the peace movement in the 1970s. It documents the paranoia of the Nixon administration and FBI director J. Edgar Hoover in their attempts to have Lennon deported. It also shows the effect their activities had on public opinion.

MUSIC

Sing the Journey 2 by Kenneth Nafziger and the Journey Musicians (Herald Press, 2006, $15.99) is the second CD of hymns from *Sing the Journey*. Featured are guest soloist Marilyn Houser Hamm, Shekinah (an independent female singing group) and Sons of the Day (a group of young men who explore a cappella traditions). Among the 19 hymns are "Loving Spirit," "Hamba nathi/Come, walk with us," "Longing for Light," "Cuando el pobre/When the poor ones," "God remembers pain" and "Alleluia, the Great Storm is over." This serves as an excellent aid to learning these songs as well as being an enjoyable listening experience.

Thistle & Jewel by Carol Ann Weaver, with vocals by Rebecca Campbell (2006, $22) features Weaver's musical settings of work by Mennonite poets Jeff Gundy, Ann Hostetler and Julia Kasdorf, plus the poignant "Anything World" by Kiera Schneider, who died at age 10. The 10 songs address nature and Swiss Mennonite life in North America with respect and playfulness. The lovely music is spare, with piano accompaniment, and the vocals sensitive, though at times it's hard to discern the words (thankfully the lyrics are printed). Order from Carol Ann Weaver, 132 Avondale Ave. S., Waterloo, ON N2L 2C3.

Those of us who bring you The Mennonite wish you God's richest blessings during this season of hope and light.

Left to right: Anna Marie Groff (assistant editor), Gordon Houser (associate editor), Rebecca Helmuth (circulation and advertising coordinator), Everett Thomas (editor), Dee Birkey (designer). Not pictured: Kristene Miller (bookkeeper), Nora Miller (proofreader) and Martha Graber (reads The Mennonite on audio cassettes).

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Shattering the silent night

Everett J. Thomas

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

The classic Christmas scene (below) is similar to millions of others. It is emblematic of the "silent night" millenia ago when time and infinity intersected in God's tiny body swathed in swaddling clothes.

But the town and land in which this event happened no longer have many silent nights. That's in part because too many U.S. Christians follow a belief that is helping destroy the Middle East. This belief is Christian Zionism, and it is perverting the possibilities of Immanuel—God with us.

Drawing on the Bible's apocalyptic literature, Christian Zionists believe that Christ cannot return until there is a final battle between good and evil—Armageddon. To hasten this event, the most radical Christian Zionists in the United States are pushing for more confrontations in the Middle East. In other words, if we can get the Middle East to explode, Christ will be forced to come back. So let's make it happen as soon as possible.

This theology is—in part—behind our government's military adventurism in the Middle East and its myopic view of Israel. But what do Christians in Israel say about this?

In an Aug. 22 statement, "The Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism," the heads of the Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Episcopal and Lutheran churches in Jerusalem said Christian Zionism is detrimental to a just peace within Palestine and Israel.

"We categorically reject Christian Zionist doctrines as false teaching that corrupts the biblical message of love, justice and reconciliation," the leaders say. "We furthermore reject the contemporary alliance of Christian Zionist leaders and organizations with elements in the governments of Israel and the United States that are presently imposing their unilateral preemptive borders and domination over Palestine. This inevitably leads to the unending cycles of violence that undermine the security of all peoples of the Middle East and the rest of the world."

As a college student I read Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* and believed it all. When I visited Israel, I looked out the bus window on to the plains of Armaggedon—where Lindsey said the apocalyptic battle will be fought. Part of me believes such an event will actually happen. As things spiral out of control in Iran and Iraq, it becomes easier for me to see why this cataclysmic battle may happen in my lifetime.

But I ask myself how such an event could square with the silent night at Bethlehem? How does such an end to our world fit with the purest love the world has known: an infant Jesus sleeping among cattle and sheep while travelers from the East make a long pilgrimage to bring him gifts?

As we once again observe the beginning of Jesus' life on this earth, we can also contemplate his life's ultimate purpose. The trajectory of God's great love for our world begins on that silent night and passes through history to conclude in a way we do not yet know. But it is inconceivable that God would lavish such wanton love on the world he created only for the purpose of death and destruction.

Each time we sing "Silent Night" this Christmas season, let's pray that it will not be shattered by misguided Christians who mix their caroling with a radical Christian Zionism that wants to bring an end to our world any way possible.—*ejt*

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6/13/2007